

JULIANA ORMESTON:

O R,

THE FRATERNAL VICTIM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Mrs. HARLEY,

AUTHOR OF

The Countess of Hennebion; Castle of Mowbray; St. Bernard's Priory, &c.

V O L. I.

D U B L I N:

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TO THE PUBLIC.

THE generous support I have hitherto met with, has induced me to come forward and personally thank the candid and liberal public, which has so nobly fostered the child of obscurity. To them I again commit the fruits of my leisure; and, protected by them, shrink not from the fiery ordeal. The Novel I now present them, differs entirely in point of style from my other productions, but though I have quitted scenes of antiquity for those of modern days, I hope the moral will be found the same.

My partial friends urge me to proceed, and it will be a real satisfaction to me to find they have not forgot me on the present occasion; and with the most heartfelt gratitude can only wish The Fraternal Victim more worthy of their patronage; but as I know

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my own humble pretensions to the wreath of public favour, I can only lay it at their feet, and beg their fostering smiles, for the future efforts to please of

Their most humble servant,

M. HARLEY.



JULIANA ORMESTON:

© R,

THE FRATERNAL VICTIM.

L E T T E R I.

MISS MORLEY TO MISS MARSDEN.

HOW strange does the retrospect seem! Three short months are scarce elapsed since our congenial friendship gladdened each others heart; and each thought, each phantom of the brain, was communicated at will. Now a world of waters lies between us; millions of rolling waves hide from my aching sight the beach from whence my friend waded me a long and last adieu! Just heavens, what a thought! Sunk indeed must be the soul of your Anna in despondency if it could give birth to an idea half so horrible. Perhaps I am doing wrong, perhaps I err, when I confess to you, I am not satisfied with this last, and indeed almost only

proof of my father's regard. Ah, how little does he know how often the feelings of his child have groaned inwardly over the ashes of her departed mother; how oft the tear of filial affection trembled in my eye, when a forced smile has taught him to believe me reconciled to the past, and satisfied with the future. The fond structure of airy painted happiness is seldom crushed without a murmur. I had long pleased myself with the ideas of domestic happiness, and paternal affection, valued friendship, all that could in any degree constitute and ensure it is vanished from before me. New connections, new worlds open to my perturbed imagination, and overwhelmed with the impetuous torrent of reflections that crowd upon my brain, I am tempted to say misery is my portion, and Providence has exhausted on me his vengeance; but there is yet one conciliatory thought behind—I have seen one error ere too late. Love and esteem I always thought one and the same; experience has taught me to divide them: and Barnston's conduct has rendered me that essential service.

But I forget my amiable friend; wholly occupied by self, I forget that you have sorrows, that your heart and soul
are



are in unison. The tear yet glistens when Mrs. Dormer is recalled to my remembrance. Cherish her memory, it is worthy to be cherished ; but let not your grief prejudice your health, or injure your disposition, either would be blame-worthy ; and reflect, you have yet friends who esteem and care for you ; not like me thrown upon the mercy of an uncle, hitherto unknown but by name, and who has too, probably, imbibed from long residence all the arbitrary principles common to the inhabitants of the torrid zone. You will scarce be able to recognize your giddy friend in the course of her sea epistle ; but indeed every idea, every nerve is deranged. Adieu. I shall not conclude till we reach land.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Teneriffe.

AT length the dreary scene is changed, our frosts and snow, and the wide expanse of waters I have traversed, give double charms to the perpetual

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spring

spring of this delightful island: the beauties around me far exceed every description, and require the talents of a muse to delineate. After many alarms from the gods of the sea, by mighty denunciations and heralds, namely, storms and sea-monsters, the latter of whom flounced and dashed around us, we reached a calmer shore, and your friend was consigned to the care of Mr. Morley. With transport I once more set my feet on the earth, and was welcomed by my uncle and a maiden sister of his with cordiality and affection. I have already formed a little judgment of their characters. My aunt is about fifty, has the remains of a fine person, and has still a most majestic air; her temper was naturally good, but a series of disappointments has not only soured it, but I fear renders her at times, far from a pleasing companion. She talks but little, and that by flights; has no opinion of the women of our days; and I fear it will be more than an Herculean task to gain her good graces.

My uncle is about ten years older, and is really a charming old man; an hour in his company put all my doubts and fears to flight. He chats with so much gaiety and good humour, that his
company

company is universally sought, both by old and young, and except an inveterate obstinacy which tinctures both his conversations and actions, I do not know a better character: he studies to make life pleasant to all around him, and being much beloved, his house is the general resort of all the fashionable people upon the island. This is not pleasant to Mrs. M. Morley, who in consequence seldom appears when there is much company: the reception of our visitors will therefore rest entirely upon me. I am indebted for many cheerful moments to Clara H. a lively French girl, an immense favorite with Mr. Morley, and at whose vivacious sallies even Mrs. M. Morley has been seen to smile. Adieu, my Charlotte, write to me, and rest assured of my friendship.

LETTER II.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS MORLEY.

YES, my dear Anna, the affection, the love of my friend, is unchanged, unaltered by distance or time; and tho' eternally separated from the sight of each other, while recollection is mine, my esteem must be the same; for true friendship is the most sacred of bonds.

The source of my grief yet unexhausted for my departed friend, when you, the sole being which sympathized with my distress, was also torn from me; I am now a being whom many profess to love, but so empty, so unmeaning are their professions, that I stand alone in the world. The Leyburns, I am well aware, regard me as the sole cause of their disappointments. Had Mrs. Dormer never known my family, her large possessions might have been theirs.

Mr. Leyburn, I must own, executes the part of my guardian with zeal and fidelity; but a cloud sometimes obscures his brow. Mrs. Leyburn confirms herself much, nor do I think would be in the least displeased were I
to

to quit her family ; but unless she openly insults me, I shall not at present : it was Mrs. Dormer's request I should reside with them, and a young woman unprotected is subject to so many disagreeable deceptions, that she cannot be too careful, and I would suffer much rather than run the many unavoidable risks the world abounds with. I wish the younger part of the family may obtain their request of coming to town, perhaps some one amongst them may possess feeling, and alleviate my uneasy hours. Mr. Leyburn wishes much to return, but his lady declares the country is horrid, and being pretty positive, I doubt not but we shall be condemned to linger away all the delights of spring in this town of confusion and noise.

The prospects of my Anna seem to brighten ; to exceed is impossible, may they only equal her merit. I saw Mr. Morley the other evening, and enquired if he had letters from his daughter ; a cool Yes, madam, was the reply. He has, you know, not the smallest opinion of female friendships ; I was half angry, but it was your father, and I suppressed it.

L E T.

LETTER III.

MISS MORLEY TO MISS MARSDEN.

YOU are not yet happy, my Charlotte, not yet resigned to our mutual loss, and I am, alas, too far to soothe or console you !

Excellent revered woman ! how noble a tribute to her memory are the regrets of all who knew her ! Friend to her kindred angels, grief is now of no avail, and if the knowledge of what passes below is known to those happy souls, a transient cloud must disturb their felicity. Cease then, thus causelessly to give way to consuming sorrow ! resume your accustomed cheerfulness, and though not a votary to the world, pass through it without disgust.

I really believe you will make me a moralizer like yourself. Not one word of gaiety and pleasure in such a number of lines, and yet I assure you it is the hand and seal of Anna Morley ; and proceed further to inform you, I am as happy as the knowledge of your sorrows will permit me to be. My uncle's generosity and unbounded partiality,
leaves

leaves me not a wish ungratified ; he studies even to prevent them. His natural inflexibility of temper even gives way where I am concerned. This delightful climate not a little contributes to the serenity I enjoy.

We spend whole days rambling in large parties among the groves, and exhaling the air scented by thousands of lemon and orange trees ; towards evening, mounted upon mules, we climb the mountain sides to enjoy the extensive and luxuriant prospects, or in negligent undresses wander along the beech to court the invigorating sea breezes : music sometimes attends the party, and the echo from the hollow cavities of the rocks has a pleasing and sublime effect.

At my return yesterday from one of these charming strolls, my uncle called me to his dressing-room, and slightly mentioned a proposal of marriage offered on my behalf, by a gentleman on board whose vessel we had been the evening before agreeably entertained. Upon my appearing averse to it, he assured me he would politely but peremptorily refuse his proffered honor.

He turned the discourse upon my aunt, of whom he spoke nearly in the following

following words: Fanny, notwithstanding her many peculiarities, possesses an excellent heart; her foibles certainly at times obscure her good qualities; a disappointment of a tender kind early in life, has occasioned them; her mind though at the moment buoyed up to heroism, yet possessed not sufficient strength to bear the moments of reflection. There is one action of her life that must never be forgotten, and although it had nearly unsettled her reason, yet must be ranked amongst the most glorious.

Our father passed the early part of his life in Portugal, and after the fashion of that country, contracted my sister when very young, to the son of a very particular friend, who in trade had rendered himself of infinite service to my father. A desire of seeing his children properly educated, induced him to quit Lisbon and settle in England. Seven years was the period fixed; at the end of that time Mr. Stewart came over, and was introduced to my sister as her destined husband. Every day confirmed in the idea. Her infantine attachment gained growth with her years, and displayed itself in every action. A cloud hung over the brow of
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of young Stewart, and a melancholy which he strove against, but could not surmount. My father attributed it to the confusion of his affairs, Mr. Stewart senior having died insolvent a short time before his arrival, his eagerness for the match was promoted by this misfortune, and his feelings prompted him to raise the child of sorrow from the dust, and give him that rank in life his merits entitled him to; he did not live, poor man, to see his wishes nobly fulfilled. Three months before the appointed nuptials he expired suddenly, and by a will made some time before, left my sister a very genteel fortune, more than herself or lover could have expected had he lived. After the proper forms of mourning, every thing went on as before, when one evening after a day of hardly disguised emotion, he told my sister he must fly her for ever; that her every look, every word reproached him with his ingratitude, which would be doubly felt if he suffered her to bestow her hand upon a miserable being, who had not a heart to offer in return.

Astonished, she bid him explain. He told her his affections were unalterably fixed upon a young lady in Lisbon, that
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he was also beloved ; but the derangement of his father's affairs rendering their marriage impossible, added to the dying request of his father, had induced him to try to conquer his unhappy partiality, and return the affection Miss Morley offered him, and her merit entitled her to ; in consequence of which he had taken a final leave of his Maria, but suppressed the soul rending intelligence of going to be united to another.

Ignorant of his situation, her mother had wrote the letter which occasioned all his emotion, and which he then presented to Miss Morley.

She entreated him in the most moving terms, to return, telling him that her relations slighted and oppressed them ; that slander had dared, by report, to sully the fair fame of Maria, and condemn her unfortunate passion ; that finally, worn down with these accumulated woes, she feared her beloved daughter would not be long spared to her tears and prayers.

Fanny dropped the tear of sympathy on this melancholy letter, self was forgot ; and observing his distress, she concealed her own emotion, returned the letter, and begged him to wait for her. She came to me, and desired I
would

would give her bills payable in Lisbon for ten thousand pounds. Knowing this sum to be half what she was worth, I naturally enquired what she proposed doing with it, and she as frankly told me. I was so struck with her generous design, that, far from opposing, I instantly procured them for her.

She enclosed the bills in an envelope, addressed to Maria, and I accompanied her to Stewart. She assumed uncommon composure, and told him the favour she was going to ask would, if he refused it, deprive her of all future peace. He faltered, hesitated, and at last said, Miss Morley may command. She then presenting the letter, requested he would bear it with all possible expedition to the person it was directed to; then taking his passive hand, she would have said, Adieu; her voice failed, and catching my arm, hurried out of the room. I wrote to Stewart, and enforced Fanny's request. He loved too well not to comply; in fine he arrived, and Maria yet lived. They opened the letter together; the contents filled them with astonishment, their gratitude was unbounded, and I was obliged to exert myself to prevail on Maria, who would not be out-done in generosity, to accept

cept her lover's and Miss Morley's well-placed bounty, which nearly cost her not only reason, but life itself; but time and the pleasing reflection of having rendered a worthy pair happy, have combined to restore her.

Here my uncle paused, and never shall my rebel spirits either complain of or ridicule aunt Morley again. Do you not applaud and revere her?

You dread being obliged to remain in London. Alas! my dear Charlotte, you are not happy with the Leyburn family there. When immersed in pleasure and dissipation, particular objects and particular ideas strike them; now can you expect to be so, when confined to the dreary shades of Manton Abbey? Amusement, or to speak more freely, satire, the greatest amusement they are capable of enjoying, must be found within their own domestic circle. I know only Miss Leyburn, if she is a specimen of the rest, good-nature and liberality shield me from them? That my Charlotte may not be wounded by their insults, is the sincere wish of

ANNA MORLEY.

L E T-

L E T T E R IV.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS MORLEY.

STILL I address my friend from London. Mr. Leyburn has yielded to the intreaties of his family, and will continue in London, I suppose during their pleasure.

Yesterday the two eldest Miss Leyburns arrived, they seemed except by their outward garb in every other respect to have forgot our common loss, and received my compliments with the most supercilious haughtiness.

Naturally humble, I feel myself an intruder ; and strange as so sudden a resolution must doubtless seem so soon after my last letter, shall certainly quit them as soon as possible ; I am indeed urged to it by a severe mortification I this morning experienced from Mrs. Leyburn, whose pride and ignorance never were, I believe, paralleled.

Our amiable friend, Lady Juliana Danby, was with me ; her family being favorites of Mrs. Dormer was sufficient to attach me to her. She was amusing me with her lively conversation, when Mrs. Leyburn flinging open
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the door in a fashionable untidy mourning dress, desired me to go into the drawing-room, and receive the company just announced, and not shut myself up with people no one knows or cares to know.

These few words, and corresponding gestures so confounded me, I could not reply. I knew not how to lift up my eyes to encounter those of the insulted Lady Juliana, who pitying my feelings, cordially embraced me, and assuring me of her continued esteem, though forbid by ill-manners and ignorance to return my visits without a proper apology, called to a servant and ordering Lady Juliana Danby's equipage, past Mrs. Leyburn, who stood petrified at the name, with a look of ineffable contempt. I retired, not to receive company, but reflect on the past scene.

How degraded, how little does she make of me! her needy dependent could not have been treated worse. These mortifications however shall soon have an end. A bustle in the house announced some change, or arrival; and at dinner I was introduced to Mr. Charles Leyburn and his cousin Joseph Collins, both just returned from Gibraltar; they both treated me with
respect,

respect, which was far from being pleasing to the other females of the family; many ill-natured sarcasms dropped from them. Had my spirits been better, I might have been diverted by their mean endeavours to render me an object of ridicule, and amused by the sensible discourse of Charles Leyburn.

The young men are both of them elegant in their persons, and refined in their manners. Mr. Collins leaves us immediately, to satisfy the fond impatience of maternal love; Charles accompanies us to Manton Abbey. You will be surprised that I make no farther mention of the young ladies; the eldest you know, and Sophronia is her counter-part; how then can I add more to the portrait? To-day is the first moment I have been honoured with their notice, and that in a manner which has wounded my sensibility, and harrowed my soul. The evening was devoted to the park; unable to enter with spirit into the amusement of the crowd, at my own request I was left at home. My first employment was, at the request of Mrs. Leyburn, to apologize for her rudeness of the morning; the sound of her ladyship had extorted from her the humiliating confession, that she had been
much

much in the wrong ; but she had not supposed it possible that I could be upon so intimate a footing with people of fashion, as to receive them in my dressing room.

Heavens, what confined ideas does this woman possess ! or in how contemptible a light must she regard me ! I will not submit much longer to such caprice and insolence.

After I had dispatched a note to Lady Juliana, I sat down in the drawing-room to read ; Ossian beguiled with his sublime melancholy a short hour ; the door then opened, and Charles Leyburn entered the room. He seemed surprised at my unfashionable employment, but hearing me seriously protest I often chose it, he sat down by me, and taking up the book, read to me till the family returned. They brought company, and we were much rallied upon our *tete-a-tete* ; Charles defended me with great vivacity, owning it designed on his part.

I learnt from him in the course of the evening, that his youngest sister Harriet is very different from the other two ; some little misunderstanding has occasioned

fioned her to reside in the country. It grows very late ; every good wish attend my beloved friend.

L E T T E R V.

MISS MORLEY TO MISS MARSDEN.

I Have just received my dear Charlotte's letter. It gives me infinite pain to find you so disagreeably situated ; my uncle joins his wishes with mine ; he has authorized me to request you will come over to us. Let us endeavour to obliterate the insults you have received from unfeeling ignorance. Were you but with me it would be my wish to remain ever here, but Mr. Morley mentions sometimes (not without regret) our return to England. As this is yet merely ideal, it need not hinder your voyage, as some years may elapse before the time of our departure takes place.

The serene tranquility of Teneriffe has in some degree worn off the traces of chagrin, and restored that flow of spirits you have so often envied. A thought
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of Barnston sometimes intrudes; I shudder at the risk I ran, to marry a man I am now convinced I never could have loved; from a principle of esteem only would have been to have planted daggers in his bosom, and received misery in return to my own. He suspected me, doubted my conduct and prudence, and, knowing the coolness of my sentiments, would have been ever the prey of jealousy; and each smile of mine bestowed upon another would have been a source of discord.

You have pleaded for him, Charlotte, you have thought my gaiety proceeded from coquetry and girlish levity; no, my friend, beneath this apparent sunshine, grief has been smothered; and feelings can exist even under smiles.

The tears you shed at my departure were precious, they were the tears of friendship: no time can obliterate them from my memory. The consolation, the confidence of a friend is sweet; you repose upon their participation, and feel relieved from oppression.

I have been stimulated to be thus free with you, Charlotte, as I have made a discovery, new to you, as may be inferred from what I have said, namely, that Anna Morley did possess a heart,

heart, and since her arrival in the Canaries, but at present has reason to believe it has taken flight. I told you in my last of a ball my uncle intended to give. All the principal people of the island were invited, and as the weather is generally violently warm, a small wood, together with the gardens were illuminated; the saloon where we danced being on the ground-floor, and entirely open on the side next the gardens formed an elegant coup d'œil.

I do not think you would approve of dancing in this climate, and what is extraordinary, though an absolute fatigue, all the inhabitants are extravagantly fond of it.

How inconsistent! exclaims my dear grave Charlotte, pausing and still holding Anna's scrawl in her hand, how very inconsistent to covet pleasures we cannot enjoy, or that the very enjoyment of renders burthen some? but yet how often is human nature guilty of this additional failing!

As mistress of the ceremonies, I equipped myself in elegant simplicity, meditating conquests. Mr. Morley with an ill-natured smile, after the first bustle of reception was over, presented to me a man of elegant person

and manners, by the name of Stanley, requesting I would open the ball with him. Thus called upon, no wonder I exerted myself; we performed with applause. He led me to my seat, and placing himself by me rattled on such repeated compliments, and in so lively, so feeling a manner bestowed his encomiums, that I felt interested, and foolishly, I own, looked grave and felt confused; yet why should I say foolishly, it will serve to convince my Charlotte I am not the unblushing, unfeeling coquette she too long thought me; but lo, the disappointment of vanity! in the course of the evening passing through an alley of the garden, I heard him talking in the same style to Clara St. Lue.

Dear vivacity came to my aid; I rallied them unmercifully, and so humbled poor Stanley, that he did not the whole evening attempt a compliment that could possibly defy any of the mere mortals they were addressed to. We danced till twelve, when the music of the garrison politely sent by the officers announced the collation prepared in the wood. We then recommenced dancing till morning was far advanced;

Mr.

Mr. Morley frequently reanimating our almost wearied spirits.

The dawn was beautiful. Unwilling to lose its charms, or separate so soon, each of the party retired to change their dresses; and some on mules, some on horses rode to Orange Grove, a small country house of my uncle's, delightfully situated on the side of a hillock, as they term it here; though my imagination has magnified it into a mountain. We breakfasted in the grove, and returned before the heat of the day to take that repose now much needed.

How should we in England exclaim against the fatigue of such an evening; here they are quite common, and owing to the peculiar goodness of the climate, not unhealthy. In our atmosphere loaded with thick fogs, and liable to momentary changes of the weather, unless you follow particular rules you are liable to many diseases entirely unknown to the inhabitants of these justly termed Fortunate Islands.

The principal and indeed only thing grating to my feelings is, being served by slaves. How much should I upbraid myself were I to consider them as such. Daily experience convinces me there are some of so vile a disposition that no-

thing but hard usage will have any effect upon them. Mr. Morley always disposes of such immediately, and keeps only those whose tractable temper accorded with his own humane feelings. His rule is this: after seven years slavery, rendered as mild as possible, if they have the least merit he rewards them with liberty, and the choice of either remaining with him as hired servants, if not he gives them a small tract of land which they cultivate with content, blessing the hand that broke the bonds of slavery.

The planters and merchants are extremely angry, and aver, that Mr. Morley spoils the slaves and injures the market. The former I deny, there is not a slave on his plantation but would sacrifice his own life to save his master's.

What a pleasing reflection to a thinking mind! What a sensation, that hundreds through its means are made happy, and eat the bread of content.

That the laws of reason and nature are not violated in the persons of our fellow-creatures, may the inhuman practice of trafficking for human flesh be speedily abolished. Oh shame, that in lands humanized by christianity, and polished by refined and liberal arts it should

should be yet upheld! let them rather forego a few trifling advantages, than be accessory to such unheard of miseries as these poor creatures too often experience.

Is it not enough to be torn from friends, relations, country, all that can endear or sweeten life, but they must be exposed like beasts in a market, and often used even worse than they are? If their good fortune guides their footsteps to the English coast they are free.

Barbarous refinement! why not extend the heaven-born gift to distant climes, nor suffer individuals, sanctioned by their country to amass riches at the expence of the blood and happiness of their fellow creatures. Horrid idea! nature revolts at its view. The day of retribution will come; then tremble in your turns, ye proud unfeeling men; the poor, the abject, scorned and ill-treated slave shall be preferred before you. His groans, his scalding tears, his stripes, his injured feelings, all stand registered against ye, at that tribunal where interest, wealth, and pomp can no longer avail ye. Tremble, and execrate the shadow of your crimes ere too late.

The subject, my dear Charlotte, carries me beyond myself; I cannot treat on it with patience. Adieu, happy inhabitant of a land of liberty; adieu, and remember

Yours, &c

LETTER VI.

MR. STANLEY TO SIR G. EDGECOMB.

DEAR GEORGE,

I Received your friendly packet by the last ship that came to Teneriffe. Its principal contents I think were, How are you settled? What trade do you carry on? from whence, and to where? With a thousand et cæteras, too tedious to mention; and, pardon my freedom, too tedious to answer.

What a confounded blunder was committed by Lady Fortune when she made you a *grave* man of fashion, with four thousand a year, and destined a gay young fellow like me to mercantile concerns,

cerns, with not as many hundreds;—my own fault I allow; but we are not always wise. My youthful years may purchase experience and wisdom from those to come.

But now to your questions, if I can recollect one or two they shall be answered, but expect no more.

I have made little or no progress in trade yet, being on my arrival seized with so violent a fever that for some days my life was despaired of; but youth, a good constitution, and this salubrious air, have entirely restored me. I have been recommended to a gentleman of great probity, who has introduced me to all his friends, amongst many is a Mr. Morley, a worthy old man, and he, George, has a niece (I have a better hand at these informations than any that concern trade) but such a girl! In one word, if Ned Stanley were out of the world, she would be just the wife to suit Sir G. Edgecomb.

Anna Morley is tall, elegantly formed, not handsome; but such laughing smiles and natural graces play around her, that she fascinates, and yet awes all the poor devils who approach her.

Being a stranger, I had the honor of dancing with her at a superb ball given

by her uncle. I thought the usual method would take, but it had no effect: she is proof against flattery, laughs at all my fine harangues, rallies all my languishing looks, and puts me absolutely out of conceit with myself. Damn it, I believe I am laugh'd at! A mighty silly affair this; insensible so long to all the beauties round me, and travel so many thousand miles to become a captive, and not a kind, a willing fair one! No, Anna is a coquette, I fear; she walks with me, dances with me, but if I offer to speak on the subject nearest my heart, she flies me; once too I caught her in tears——no symptom of an unfeeling heart. I would have given worlds to share her distress if she has any, but she evaded the inquiry.

You have often wished me seriously attached; behold my friend, the moment arrived. I never before Anna saw a woman capable of inspiring me with it; a beautiful trifler would never be my choice. A woman should possess all the feminine softness of her sex, with a mind well cultivated, and stored with useful knowledge, and pleasing rather than superficial accomplishments. In short, I would never marry to blush for my wife every time she was on the point of opening

ing her mouth. Anna Morley, if she possesses not all the external graces of her sex, makes ample amends I am confident in internal ones; she speaks but little, but every sentence is dictated by elegant propriety; and a heart I hope not devoid of feeling for poor Ned Stanley.

Thus, George, you may perceive how matters stand, and are perhaps a little fatigued by my minute account of what you *did not* enquire about. Had you reflected a moment, Edgecomb, you might have imagined it much more easy for me to have given you an account how many fine women there were upon the island, than how many bales arrived in the last cargo. Adieu.

Thine,

E. S.

LETTER VII.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS MORLEY.

AT length, my dear Anna, we are far from the busy crowd of London, and repose our wearied spirits in the gloomy though not sequestered scenes of Manton Abbey.

Dragged involuntarily into the throng while in town, how often have I sat and listened with disgust, while perhaps an officer who ought to have enlarged upon the bravery, the discipline of our forces (or at least found a discourse some way answerable to his profession) discurs with a lady the beauty of a feather, the merits of her lap-dog, or the fineness of his lace. Operas, balls, and plays employ the general attention, from the minister of state to the petit maitre. How strange to those whose knowledge of the world has before been totally confined to letters! How flattering is it held up; how different to the ideas formed from elaborate description! To me the world appears in masquerade, and the fine gent eman appears an accomplished fool; they imagine their behaviour and conversation

versation please the ladies—some it may, but I am certain many are listeners with the same lassitude as myself.

But I must not forget I have many charming characters to bring you acquainted with. One of the foremost is Harriet Leyburn, a lively and really sensible girl; I have spent many pleasing hours with her and Charles; they have high spirits and will not brook the insults of their sisters. The frequent disputes render the house so very disagreeable that I have persuaded Mr. Leyburn, who does not want discernment, to suffer me to reside with Mrs. Osborn, who with one daughter inhabits a sweet little retreat, only a morning's walk from the Abbey. Mrs. Dormer knew them, and Henry and Delia Osborn were among the companions of my infant years. Charles and Harriet will often visit me, and I shall lead the life I love, a life of tranquil peace. I am the rather induced to fix my departure so early as to-morrow for this reason. Before I quitted London I unfortunately reconciled Lady Juliana Danby to Mrs. Leyburn; I say unfortunately, as her frequent visits drew thither also Lord Malcomb, the brother of Juliana, who incapable of either delicate

cate or refined passion, professed himself my admirer; I politely refused him through the medium of Mr. Leyburn, but he has availed himself of some friends in the neighbourhood of the Abbey, to renew his persecutions from which my abode at Sanson Vale will effectually release me. Adieu; I haste to obey a summons from Delia Osborn.

Yours.

LETTER VIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I Have now been three days in my charming retreat, and gratitude claims the first-fruits of my pen. Tell Mr. Morley words are feeble to express my extraordinary sense of the protection he would kindly extend to me. My Anna's lively friendship too merits all a feeling mind can dictate: may happiness be her lot. I cannot doubt the merits of her choice; he

he must be blest, whoe'er he be if preferred by her.

You will expect some account of San-son Vale. It abounds with many beauties, the house is small but perfectly elegant, surrounded by a beautiful plantation cut into extensive walks; the fruit is open to a fine level country, a river runs within a small distance of the house, which after many meanders empties itself into the sea about four miles distant. The banks are beautifully diversified, and adorned with clumps of various trees, and seats interspersed at small distances.

Our time is regularly divided; at eight we breakfast, and if the weather prove favorable walk after; the remainder of our time till dinner is employed in work, reading, music, or drawing; in the two latter Miss Osborn is a great proficient. She is a sensible amiable girl, I esteem her much, and am mistaken if Charles Leyburn does not follow my example. Mrs. Leyburn and her two eldest daughters are going to Scotland to visit some relations.

Mrs. Osborn expects an agreeable addition to her family shortly; her son is returning from his travels; he has sent her the agreeable intelligence that he
has

has hopes of recovering a considerable property they have long been deprived of. At his return we are to have a rustic ball to welcome him to Sanson Vale, the preparations for which totally occupy Miss Osborn and myself; we have decorated a small building in the wood with ornaments of our own manufacture, intermixed with coloured lamps.

Three days hence is fixed for his arrival, we are therefore in haste,

Yours,

C. M.

LETTER IX.

SIR GEORGE EDGECOMB TO MR. STANLEY.

I Need not express how happy your *hasty* epistle made me; I am too sincerely your friend not to rejoice at a change of disposition, which your own good sense will suggest was absolutely necessary, you will in knowing the value of domestic enjoyments

ments become what is my ardent wish to see you, a valuable member of society.

I have often taken upon me the authority of a few years, to chide your extreme propensity to gallantry. Your person, without flattery, will always claim attention, well convinced of it, I have, with pain, often beheld you ardently pursuing some fine shewy female, and encouraging the rising partiality; I say I have beheld it with pain, as I well knew your heart and tongue were not in unison. And I must take the liberty of again repeating what I have often said, that I do not know a more contemptible weakness a man can possibly be guilty of than endeavouring to obtain the preference of any lady, in order to trifle with her feelings, or triumph in deserting her. I will not say that you ever intended either. And at present divested of some of the false prejudices of modern fashion, the goodness of your heart will expand itself, you will be startled at the undisguised truth, and I trust will never fall again into the same error.

Man was originally designed to protect and cherish the weaker sex, not to delude and oppress them.

If

If you look upon Miss Morley in a proper and serious light, I wish you every success your most sanguine hopes can form, if not, I hope that superior sense you allow her to possess will enable her to behold the fallacy of your pretended adorations.

I heartily beg pardon for the blunder I committed in writing to a fine gentleman about trade, and still more in exacting answers concerning it; in future when you write to me, follow the genuine dictates of your heart, and I think you will not err. I, on my part will endeavour to select such subjects as are more adapted to your taste than dull method or numeration.

Chide me if I am still too partial to a gay careless fellow.

Our mutual friend Campbel is in the greatest distress of mind imaginable; the occasion of this you know before you left England he paid his addresses to Lady Juliana Danby, favoured by the whole family, except her eldest brother Lord Malcomb, who, too much attached to the vices of the world, despises those virtues he does not possess, and promotes the suit of Lord Ormeston, a gambler of rank like himself, with this difference, fortune favours the latter; and
the

the world does not scruple to say, the league formed between them is in consequence of immense sums lost by Lord Malcomb, and gained by Lord Ormeston, which, whilst the earl lives, the former will be unable to pay. Juliana's immense fortune is a tempting consideration, and no art, I doubt will be left untried. But to return to Campbel's share in the affair; we all met in company at Brookes's the other evening; neither Campbel nor myself ever play, we therefore walked the rooms, till the dice running high against Lord Malcomb, we became interested and insensibly hazarded a few bets; his opponent was Wilson, who has often been suspected of chicanery by unprejudiced persons, but whom his dupes believe a very paragon. Campbel, whose spirit you know kindles at the smallest shadow of dishonour, detected a false shew, which, had nearly deprived Lord Malcomb of five thousand pounds, in addition to the losses of the evening, and to the confusion of Wilson instantly exposed his manœuvre, and was joined by the rest of the company in obliging him to restore his illicit gains. Campbel then completed his disgrace by kicking him

him out of the room, amidst the execrations of the company.

Malcomb's countenance expressed sullen dissatisfaction during the whole proceeding, and though he coolly thanked Campbel for the service he had done him, yet intimated, as we left the house, that as he had not thought proper to resent Wilson's duplicity, he ought not. So flimsy a pretext on which to ground a quarrel, could not but be observed, for Lady Juliana's sake he bore with much, but his answers, however mild, were misconstrued, and at length he was reduced to the necessity of telling him he was ready to vindicate his conduct. A challenge was the consequence, and the next morning appointed. Lord Malcomb, as we now perceived, heated by liquor would have decided the difference immediately, but I interposed, and agreed to be Campbel's second. Think not however, Ned, I have renounced the principles I have hitherto maintained; duels are still my abhorrence, I look on them as refined murder, and yet must allow, there are some cases in which they cannot be avoided; Our friend had been grossly abused. Lord Malcomb had long wished for such an opportunity; and regardless of the
danger

danger he himself ran equally with the object of his hate, far from, as I hoped, reflecting upon the impropriety of his conduct, he met us the next morning with mad resentment flaming in every feature, and nothing but the generous intrepidity of Campbel should have hindered the other second and myself insisting upon the meeting being adjourned; at length matters were adjusted, and they fired without effect, Lord Malcomb discharged a second pistol, the ball grazed his opponent's left arm, who immediately fired his in the air, and asked Lord Malcomb if he was satisfied. No was the decisive answer, and he attacked Campbel with the utmost fury; after a few thrusts, our friend received a large and dangerous wound in his side, but in the same moment wounded and disarmed his enraged adversary, to whom he generously returned his sword; we now interfered, and obliged them to shake hands. I conveyed Campbel to his lodgings, and procured proper assistance; the surgeons pronounced him in some danger, but gave me hopes, which were confirmed the tenth day, in which his senses returned; he entreated me to endeavour to see Lady Juliana, and assure her he was compelled to draw
his

his sword against her brother. My return augmented his fever, and threw me into despair. The whole family had set off that morning for the south of France, except Lord Malcomb, who is to follow, as soon as his strength which he receives daily will admit.

I am persuading Campbel, in order to divert his attention, to visit his mother and sisters, by short and easy stages; I will accompany him. They are still anxious about him, as the newspaper accounts were dreadful. I doubt not but the wounded pride, as well as the spirit of resentment, yet unsubdued in the bosom of Lord Malcomb, has suggested this journey; the Earl, foolishly blind to the vices and bad consequences of his heir, implicitly follows his advice, which the young viscount has the art to temper with such moral reflections, and feelings known to him alone by theory, that he has gained full sway over a temper, naturally obdurate and inflexible. I saw your uncle the earl yesterday, he seems much pleased with your last letters, and the accounts he hears of you; he has entirely given up the matrimonial scheme, and I believe thinks more of a nurse and flannels, than

than of a young wife and a gay equipage. Adieu, my dear, and believe me with all affection,

Yours,

G. E.

LETTER X.

MISS MARSDEN TO LADY JULIANA DANBY.

IN my last I expressed my surprise and concern at your hasty departure; I shall as you request, my dear Juliana, write often, and inform you of what occurrences happen in my little world. Odd as it may seem, you are not always unconcerned.

Henry Osborn is arrived. The often procrastin'd day is arrived at last! Delia and myself were at the Temple viewing it after its completion, in order to find out any defects which might occur; I was pointing out one that struck me, our backs were both towards the door,

door, and she was listening to my remark, when I felt myself clasped in the arms of some person, who eagerly exclaimed, My beloved Delia !

Startled as I was, I had scarce power to disengage myself; the stranger blushing, discovered his mistake, but before he had time to apologize, Delia was in his arms. After a moment of rapture she turned to me, my dear Miss Marsden, my beloved Henry will easily pardon a mistake committed by fraternal love and impatience. Mr Osborn bowed on my hand a silent apology; silent do I call it, when his eyes spoke the most elegant language? We returned directly to the house; he told us he had with him two friends, to whom he was impatient to introduce us, as their stay was no longer than while a chaise could be procured. The compassion visible in Mr. Osborn's manner while he spoke of these friends interested me; judge then if it was less when passing the parlour window, I saw the pale though still elegant features of Campbel, conversing with Sir George Edgecomb.

Mr. Osborn was surprised to find us so well acquainted.

Campbel faltered as he addressed me; a pale flush suffused his face, and I saw
with

with concern, he still carries his arm in a sling. He entreated me to tell him where my friend was to be found. So much did his appearance excite my compassion, that with difficulty I preserved the promise I made not to disclose your route.

She is then exasperated against me cried he; she believes——She knows, interrupted I, that you have drawn your sword against her brother, and honor requires a sister to revenge his cause. My eyes, Juliana, spoke not the language of my tongue.

Ah, exclaimed he, traversing the room, cruel prejudice! but I ought to have known there was no alternative, after submitting to the laws of custom, I should not have resisted the sword of Lord Malcomb; in death perhaps the wretched Campbel would not have been hated. But at her feet the offence shall be expiated; my beating heart will not burst till I have seen her; a tear will perhaps grace the last moments of a wretched life.

Ah, Juliana! I was no longer your advocate; all the woman swelled to my eyes, and I extended my hand towards Campbel.

I thank your generous confession,
con-

continued he, bowing upon my hand, but I distress you, Miss Marsden. Great God! I am bound to carry sorrow wherever I go!

His voice now became scarcely audible, he beat his head against the wall, and those fine eyes which once shone with sensibility, seemed fixed in a languid unmeaning gaze.

The chaise arrived. I was no longer your friend, but his; and at the hazard of your displeasure, took from my pocket your picture, and presented it to him: Accept, I cried, the gift of friendship——depend upon my good offices, and let this enable you to bear the present with patience, and look forward to the future with hope. He gazed with extacy upon the picture, then snatching my hand kissed it with rapture, and unable to express the powerful and contending passions of his soul, threw himself into the chaise, followed by Sir George, who with a friendship, truly benevolent, attaches himself to him, soothes, advises, and consoles him.

I felt relieved when the chaise drove off, although traces of melancholy still remained, which my three friends united their utmost efforts to dissipate. We were just set down to tea, when Harriet Leyburn flew in with her usual vivacity.

Charlotte!

Charlotte! exclaimed she, after the first compliment, mimicking my gravity, I am afraid you are already acquainted with the bad news I have brought. Alarmed, I besought her to tell me. The teasing girl began a long story of a quarrel she had just had with her sisters, in consequence of which she had persuaded her father to let her come immediately to me, and pass not only the time till they set off for Scotland, but even that period itself, at Sanfon-Vale. We all received this intelligence with joy; and she came to us the next day, accompanied by Charles, whose regiment being quartered within five miles, intends us frequent visits.

Three days passed agreeably, charmed with her vivacity and wit. Mr. Osborn and Harriet were inseparable; nor must I forget our rustic ball: rustic indeed compared to those of the metropolis; but we are mere villagers, and contented ourselves with every thing plain, elegant, and simple.

The ladies were all dressed as country girls; and the fame of the ball at Sanfon-Vale has been spread afar.

The day after Mr. Leyburn brought a most unwelcome piece of intelligence

namely, that his mother was extremely ill in London, and Harriet being her favorite, begged to see her; in consequence of which she was obliged to set off immediately with her father, not a little out of humour at being obliged to quit us.

Henry Osborn appears lost without her. What a charming pair! Heigho! I think I am infected with their melancholy. Campbel too is ever before my eyes; forgive my importunities, but let me intreat if ever you happen to meet, hear him; remember it is your Charlotte requests it, Adieu; I am just going to write to Harriet; she wishes much to know the story of Anna Morley and Barnston, and I have promised her a letter on the subject. Once more adieu.

C. MARSDEN.

LETTER XI.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS LEYBURN.

IN compliance with my dear Harriet's request, I mean to send her to-day the long promised narrative of Miss Morley; it may serve to beguile you not only of a few tedious

dious moments, but even of a few tears.

Her father was a gentleman of good fortune in Hertfordshire; but frequenting London at an age when most men quit their follies, he became enamoured with fashionable dissipation, lived almost in the subscription-houses, and on the turf; the consequences were, that by the time Miss Morley attained her fifteenth year, he was reduced to the necessity of mortgaging his whole estate to pay his debts of honor; luckily he had one real friend left, who had frequently remonstrated with him, in vain, upon the cruelty of reducing a deserving wife and amiable child to a state of dependency, when they had every right to expect it far otherwise from him. This gentleman now exerted his influence, and obtained for Mr. Morley an employment of considerable consequence in Ireland; Mrs. Morley and her daughter was placed in a genteel family, to board, and for four years he constantly wrote and remitted them a proper allowance.

Never, however, expressing any of that fond solicitude, so natural for a distant husband and father to feel towards objects truly deserving of it;

nor even in his letters mentioning a wish to see them.

Mrs. Morley complained of his want of affection, in the style of a virtuous neglected wife; his letters and remittances then became less frequent, and at length she received one intimating, that his employment latterly had not been so advantageous as before, and that he should solicit an exchange; mean time she must try her friends, for he could not at present support her but in a very limited manner. The whole letter was wrote with such chilling coldness, that it harrowed the soul of the unfortunnte Mrs. Morley.

Overwhelmed by the cruelty of a husband she still loved, and distracted for the future fate of her Anna, nature could not sustain the shock, and a dreadful fever ensued, in the delirium of which she put an end to her woes by swallowing laudanum.

Miss Morley had left the room to answer some enquiries after her mother, and returning in about ten minutes, found the nurse asleep, and her mother hanging half out of the bed, senseless. Her cries alarmed the family, and roused the careless attendant, who running

ning first to the table, found the empty phial, a melancholy proof what had occasioned the scene before her. All efforts to relieve Mrs. Morley were ineffectual; and the unhappy sacrifice to unkindness slept, to wake no more.

Miss Morley was inconsolable, and totally incapable of giving any directions. The lady of the house therefore wrote to Mrs. Weston, her deceased mother's aunt, who came instantly to town, regulated the interment of Mrs. Morley, and as soon as the last melancholy rites were paid, took Anna to her house at Brook-Hill.

Anna, as soon as the first violent emotions of her grief were over, wrote a heart-rending epistle to her father; she described the late melancholy event in the most plaintive manner, and conjured him, if he did not really hate her, to suffer her to come over, and not be deprived of the protection of a father. She then entered into some of the parties her aunt was incessantly engaged in, more from complaisance than inclination.

Mrs. Watson saw with pleasure that her charming niece attracted the notice of several men of family and fortune;

tune; amongst many others, Mr. Sidney, and Mr. Barnston were candidates for her favor.

The latter was the best received by Miss Morley, who, although she felt no great propensity in his favor, yet as her aunt was extremely partial to him, and looked upon it as a very advantageous settlement, she listened to him with complacency.

Sidney was a man of intrigue; his pride more than his love was wounded at the preference given to his rival, who was received at the house as the future husband of Anna; the consent of Mr. Morley alone was wanting, and he was expected ere long in England.

Sidney disguised his chagrin, and resolved to have recourse to artifice to blacken the fame of Anna; for this purpose, one evening that he knew a great deal of company were expected to sleep at the house, and amongst the number his rival, the designing Sidney got himself conveyed into Miss Morley's apartment; when she retired thither, she waited some time for her servant who was privy to the concealment, and rising out of patience at length to ring the bell, discovered Sidney.

Her

Her fright prevented her from knowing him, and shrieking very loud, she alarmed all the family. Before any one could reach her apartment, terror had deprived her of her senses. What a sight for Barnston! who was one of the first that entered the room; his beloved Anna fainting in the arms of his rival, who conjured her in the most tender manner, to be composed, and support the discovery of their mutual attachment with becoming fortitude; adding many well placed insinuations to lead those present to imagine he came in consequence of an appointment she had forgot she had made.

He took care to withdraw ere Miss Morley was perfectly recovered. Barnston's frenzy exceeded all bounds; after upbraiding the half dying Anna, regardless of her protestations, and blinded by his jealousy, flew in search of his rival, who prudently eluded his steps. He wrote the next day to Mrs. Watson; in his letter he artfully insinuated, that he had only entered the apartment upon hearing a shriek from Miss Morley. The absurdity of this excuse, as he was not to have passed the night at Brook-Hill, only irritated the good lady; and in a reply dicta-

ted by some warmth, she forbade him the house for ever.

Anna was inconsolable; she dreaded the tongue of detraction, against which her aunt attempted vainly to defend her. Sidney contradicted not the histories circulated at her expence. Too many, my dear Harriet, are there of malevolent spirits, who rejoice in the downfall of virtue; wonder not then that the fair fame of Anna was aspersed, and that Barnstone found in every new report fresh foundation for jealousy. Revenge, however, still fired his breast, and hearing that Sidney was gone to London, he set off also, and lost no time in challenging his (as he imagined) fortunate rival. The fortune of the field was against Sidney, he fell, and amply justified the wronged Miss Morley: his words were those of conviction. Barnstone curst his jealousy, which had ruined his hopes of happiness, and ordering a chaise, posted to Brook-Hill.

Anna, in the mean time wearied with the continual ill-nature of the neighbourhood, accepted a very slight invitation from her father to meet him in London. She parted from her benevolent aunt with a regret, strengthened

ed, if possible, by her generous vindication of her. She had not got farther from Brook-Hill than twenty miles, when the drivers carelessly overset the chaise, and she was taken out of it stunned with the violence of the shock. Upon her recovery, she found herself seated on a bank, and supported with great tenderness in the arms of Barnston. She started and turned from him. He besought her to pity, to forgive him. Resentment was at that moment the most predominant passion in the mind of Miss Morley; she looked upon a wish to renew the sorrows his attachment had caused her to experience, as a fresh insult to her wounded feelings; and collecting her scattered spirits, thanked him with firmness for the trouble she had given him, but begged he would never renew so painful a subject. Then taking the arm of her servant, walked towards the chaise, now nearly put to rights.

Confounded at this coolness, which, though his rashness had merited, his self-love did not expect, Barnston followed Miss Morley to the carriage, and when she was seated, again begged to be heard. She not only persisted in denying him, but added, From

henceforth, sir, we must be strangers to each other; you believed me capable of a baseness my soul abhors, and never can I know happiness with a man who has once suspected me. Adieu, Mr. Barnston, may you be more fortunate in another choice. The chaise by her orders then proceeded.

Barnston went on to Brook-Hill. His reception from Mrs. Watson confirmed that he had no hope left to appease Miss Morley; he quitted England to make the tour of Europe.

This is the narrative you have so long asked, and I freely own would have been sooner sent, had you not wished me to subjoin some little account of myself. To speak of one's self is often an irksome task, to me it was ever peculiarly so; but the scornful manner in which Mrs. Leyburn has so often mentioned me, requires me to inform who and what I am, that part of the family, who notwithstanding their generosity and partiality, might think a stranger both a useless and unjust burthen.

I am, my dear Harriet, your father's ward, but not his dependent; I am an orphan, alas! in the fullest sense of that emphatic word.

Far

Far happier they who silently repose in peace and safety with the honoured dust of those who gave them being; alone and unregarded, the world too oft oppresses and disgusts them ere half their course is run.

My mother in her early years was the intimate friend of Mrs. Dormer. My mother had a brother on whom was her chief dependance, many years older than herself, and settled in the island of Granada; when her education was finished, he urged her to come to him, and on her arrival introduced her to the governor's lady, who conceived a particular esteem for her; her residence was principally at their castle. My father visited there (he was heir to an opulent planter, who doated upon him) my mother pleased him, and in six months he married, to the satisfaction of all their friends.

I was the pledge of their union, but had scarcely attained the age of five years, when a dreadful fever carried away my mother, amidst many hundreds of victims to its pestilential ravages; and the ensuing year, a furious hurricane destroyed some, and laid waste other of my father's plantations. My grand-

grandfather was buried in the ruins of his favourite country-house at Rosetta.

Overwhelmed with this series of calamities, my father gathered up the wrecks of his shattered fortune, and left Grenada in hopes of enjoying in a calm retreat in England, the society of his child and a few esteemed friends. I can just remember his affectionate fondness for me during our voyage; the length of it made me so extremely ill, that as business of particular consequence demanded my father's presence in London, he was obliged to leave me to the care of a lady he had some knowledge of at Portsmouth.

Alas, I was to see him no more! affliction had laid a heavy weight upon his heart; fatigue and anxiety were added to it, and he sunk under them.

Finding his end approaching, he sent for Mrs. Dormer; he recommended the orphan daughter of her friend to her care: the awful moment of death was soothed by her kind assurances of regard for his child.

She religiously observed her promise; she adopted, and in me lived again the Charlotte of her youthful days. At her decease she added her large personal fortune to the few thousands my father left

left me: I might live in affluence, and join the great world, but it is not my choice, nor ever was that of Mrs. Dormer.

Far from her perfection, at an humble distance let me strive to imitate her virtues; yes, blest spirit of my more than mother, I will seek, like thee, the abode of wretchedness, and every child of sorrow shall be mine.

The length of my letter, my dear Harriet, renders any apology for closing it unnecessary. Hasten your return to Sanfon-Vale, and believe me affectionately

Yours

C. MARSDEN.

L E T.

LETTER XII.

HENRY OSBORN TO MR. MEREDITH

YOUR penetration, my dear Meredith, has not failed you; I own the very influence of Miss Marsden's perfections; every day I discover some new charm in her, every day convinces me more fully of her insensibility. My sister tells me she has refused many good matches, but owned herself surprized at the sudden change which had taken place in the disposition and manners of Miss Marsden; she never was cheerful in any extreme, though sufficiently so to be happy.

A great share of sensibility, sentiments remarkably refined, and a taste for solitude have ever been the leading traits of her character, but at present she seems particularly thoughtful, avoids every one, and at times appears miserable. Yesterday I overtook her in the garden, her step was hasty and unequal; she often lifted her hand to her forehead, and seemed uncommonly agitated.

Fearing she was ill, I hastened towards her; she started as if a spectre had glared

glared before her, and had not my ready arm caught the fair trembler, she must have sunk to the ground. I begged to know the cause of her emotion; if she had griefs to share them, and assured her of my eternal friendship.

I had nearly substituted a word more suited to my own feelings, but feared it would seem impertinent in the moment of affliction, but my eyes were traitors if they spoke not for me; a faint smile for a moment overspread her face, but vanished upon recollection.

You distress me, Mr. Osborn, by an offer I cannot accept. Friendship demands an unlimited confidence; I have the highest opinion of your head and heart, but there are some afflictions we cannot confide. I have been guilty of a weakness, which will perhaps tincture my future years with melancholy. I think I shall leave England for some time. Miss Morley has urged me to visit her; the change of scene may relieve my spirits from oppression, and my friends from anxiety upon my account.

I took her hand; you wrong your friends, my dear Charlotte, if you imagine they will so easily give you up; surely whatever charms Miss Morley's society may have for Miss Marsden, she
has

has too much regard for her friends, to render them all miserable, to gratify Miss Morley alone. Have you mentioned it yet to any other person? To Charles Leyburn, returned she—then blushed, and sighed.

That blush, that sigh! I was going to pour out all the tenderness of my soul at her feet, but it was restrained by that name, and so accompanied! She surely loves him, Meredith. I have observed his partial assiduities, but till now thought not she returned them. I am convinced, and miserable. Surely he will not give up his country also! Reflections overwhelm me.

We reached the house. The happy Leyburn met us; her embarrassment vanished at his approach. You will excuse me, Mr. Osborn, said she, if I quit you; but Mr. Leyburn has an account to give me of some trifling business; then hastily courtesying, took his arm and left me.

I am not worthy of her confidence—Distraction! I fear some moment of wild enthusiasm may betray more than I wish; at any rate suspense is not to be borne; I will try her by every possible attention to another; and if she leaves England, and is really attached to Leyburn

burn, in the gay dissipations of London and your enlivening company, Henry Osborn will forget Charlotte Marsden.

L E T T E R XIII.

MR. STANLEY TO SIR GEORGE EDGCOMBE.

THANKS, my dear Sir George, for the many friendly letters the various vessels lately arrived have transmitted me from you; although filled with excellent advice, I will freely own they would have lost their usual weight, had they not also contained my friend's approbation of Miss Morley.

I must own to you, George, this serious attachment made a perfect fool of me; but Mr. Morley, good soul, helped me out of all my perplexities.

About ten days ago he was taken suddenly ill; he sent for me, and making a short excuse for the abrupt manner in which he was going to speak, told me he had reason to fear he could not sustain another fit, violent as had been
the

the last, and therefore deemed it most prudent to settle all his worldly concerns.

In fine, George, he told me he had observed the love I had long felt for his niece; that he had enquired into my character and connexions, was satisfied with them, and provided Anna's consent could be obtained, should be happy to leave her under the protection of so *worthy a young man*. Pray mind that, George, next time the reproving style suits your pen or your inclinations.

I assure you I was so transported that I do not know to this day whether I thanked him or not.

He added, that his sister Fanny had acquainted Anna with his wish. At that moment she passed the window; her form was loveliness itself, and I must have been a dull dog to have sat listening to the old uncle, though as worthy a mortal as ever breathed, when the beloved niece was so nigh; I flew after her, I tried to be coherent, but my words were mere rhapsody, the melancholy traces upon my Anna's face were scarce sufficient to recall my scattered senses.

She spoke of her uncle and sighed; I repeated our conversation; she blushed

as

as she spoke, but made me this answer: I cannot nor do not wish to deceive you, Mr. Stanley; I am not at all displeased that your inclinations coincide with the wishes of my revered, my beloved uncle; but there are some circumstances which you ought to know, and which I never could forgive myself if I disguised.

She then related the very story they wrote me some time since, of the duel between Barnston and Sidney; her sincerity was not more than I expected of her; had she not avowed the past, she would certainly, as you mentioned, have had something worthy of concealment relative to it.

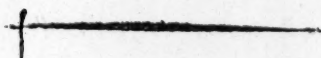
I did not hesitate, I took her unreluctant hand, and swore on it never to be another's; my perseverance seemed to restore her some degree of confidence, and I was transported to find she was firmly fixed against her unworthy lovers; I painted her situation alone and unprotected, at such an immense distance from her friends, if she should lose her worthy uncle.

In short, I obtained a kind of half consent, but her reserve wears off daily; we watch Mr. Morley together; the pleasures, the sorrows of Anna are mine.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear friend, may my next inform you that Ned Stanley is commenced

BENEDICT.



L E T T E R X I V .

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS MORLEY.

FEARING, if the vessels now ready to sail should arrive at Teneriffe without a line from me, the gentle heart of Anna may be alarmed, I take up my pen, though almost unequal to the task, to tell her my weakness, and the consequent distress it has brought upon me ; how often, my Anna, have you wondered at my insensibility, and laughing told me, the vacancy in my heart would be one day occupied ; fatal prophecy ! happy insensibility ! what reason have I not to regret ye !

Ah, Anna, your friend has prodigally lavished away all her tenderness on one who cannot accept it ; he has offered friendship, but another possesses
his

his love. I am no heroine, Anna, I cannot suppress my feelings; the tender tear of regret strays oft unbidden down my cheek. Ah! that strength was but once more given me that I might fly to the bosom of friendship for pity and consolation, Anna Morley would soothe all my anxious dreads, and restore perhaps that peace of mind my harassed frame has long wanted; I have carefully concealed my anguish from every surrounding eye; I could not survive even their suspicions, should they rest even on so delicate a theme. They weary me with enquiries; I would persuade them I am well, but alas, the ravages of inward disquiet point themselves but too plainly on my boded cheeks. Mr. Osborn's solicitude is of all others the most painful; presuming on our long acquaintance, he is but too importunate; alas, why did he forsake me in the moment of danger? or rather, why had not Charlotte and all her woes perished in a watery grave? Ah! I would finish, I would tell you more, but my strength fails. Adieu.

[Enclosed

[Enclosed in a cover with the preceding.]

MISS OSBORN TO MISS MORLEY.

MADAM,

AT the request of Miss Marsden I send you the inclosed, which her trembling hand had scarce sealed, ere she was obliged to be removed to her bed, she is ill; but be not uneasy, I trust in no danger; her illness proceeds from a cold caught one evening in a water party, when the boat was unfortunately overfet. I fear much more, some secret uneasiness which seems to prey upon her mind, and turns the consolatory sympathy of friendship into officiousness; believe me, no endeavour shall be omitted to restore her to the affections and wishes of her friends.

Miss Marsden was never lively; but at present, from depression of spirits, she is actually a prey to gloomy melancholy; the child of sensibility; the most trifling incident calls up her feelings, and renders her wretched.

Mr. Leyburn tells me in confidence she has more than once talked of visiting
you,

you, and consulted with him how she should go ; in her present weak state it would be highly improper, and he will endeavour to dissuade her from it. Alas, my dear Madam, how incompatible are riches with happiness ! Miss Marsden often declares that she has no other use for them but to render others happy ; that she executed this benevolent purpose in the highest degree I am well convinced, but yet tastes not herself of the cup of happiness. May heaven restore to the dear sufferer her health and spirits, and reward her as her distinguished virtues merit, is the sincere wish of her sincere friend, and Miss Morley's humble servant,

DELIA OSBORN.

LETTER XV.

LADY JULIANA MELCOMB TO MISS
MARSDEN.

Montpellier.

MY dear Charlotte, you are ill, perhaps dangerously so; and many, many tedious days must elapse ere I hear of you; this air is reckoned salutary; come over to us, my brother is at Paris, and scarce honours us with a thought; you need therefore not apprehend his presence; how rejoiced should I be could my assiduous attention contribute to restore you.

My father is much better; he is enraged against poor Campbel; I must own he had provocation; I cannot justify my brother, and yet dare not encourage his enemy; the struggle is a severe one, yet I think I have sufficient fortitude. A few lessons from my dear Charlotte would entirely finish the half completed work, yet I cannot think of this Lord Ormeston; too surely a too powerful pleader is yet busy within, which will not let me behold him in the light I do and ever must his rival.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Charlotte; these trifles never discompose so placid a bosom as yours. Hasten to your afflicted

J. M.

L E T T E R XVI.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS MORLEY.

TRLMBLING, my dear Anna, on the very verge of a precipice, the affrighted Charlotte dare yet scarcely look around and say she exists.

You have ere this period, heard of my illness; you have heard of the ravages it has made in the susceptible frame of your friend; but you yet know but imperfectly the cause.

I have been blinded by self-love; I have vainly supposed Henry Osborn felt the dawnings of an attachment; hope has deceived me; I suffered myself to love and was miserable.

His evident partiality to Miss H. Leyburn could not escape my notice, when it became the universal topic at Sanson-Vale; pride made an effort in my favour, but unequal to the conflict, my spirits were violently afflicted; time

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might

might yet have assisted my endeavours, when an accident nearly put an end to them and my life together.

It was upon a fine summer's evening Harriet Leyburn proposed a party upon the water; ever eager to oblige her, Mr. Osborn soon had the pleasure-boat got ready, and myself and several young people of the neighbourhood accompanied them; the evening was serene and fine; the music we had in the boat re-echoed from the shore, and soothed the soul to harmony; a pleasing languor took possession of my soul; a tear once strayed from my eye; Mr. Osborn saw it, he turned away methought (but I was mistaken); a sigh and a look of regret stole from him; we went further than we ought, before the Gentlemen perceived the evening to be so far advanced; they ordered the boatmen to row back.

My fingers will scarce serve me to recount the scene that followed; I still shuddered at the recollection; the tide began to rise with rapidity; it grew suddenly dark; the hollow wind shook me with terror, and the loud roaring of the swelling waves indicated a most dreadful tempest, it seemed to accord with my gloomy thoughts; the weather and them were in unison; by force of labour

we reached the landing place; every one crowded to seek their safety on shore; a boatman seized me in his arms, and landed me safe; finding me unable to walk without assistance, he begged me to sit down on a bank, till he had been again to the boat; I sat a few moments; my head was confused, yet my strength seemed to return; I rose, I remembered my friends, and walked towards the shore; a shriek of distress rived my very soul; I called aloud, I ran along the beach; another shriek still nearer drew my attention; I heard the voice of Henry Osborn, it seemed a faint exhausted voice, animated with the hope of saving the lives of those left in danger, and amongst the rest, that of one so dear to me. I hastened to the house (Delia had not accompanied us), all was silent, I ran to the library, the soft sounds of her harp seemed the music of the spheres; but her brother was in danger: I burst into the room, and breathless with speed and affright, could scarce tell my dreadful tale; Delia herself flew with the attendance to seek her beloved brother, and left me a prey to agony.

Unable long to endure the dreadful suspense, I again braved the fury of

the storm; the rain now descended in torrents, the livid lightning flashed, and the loud thunder rolled; overpowered with terror, unused to such horrors, I sunk senseless to the ground, and remained so some hours after I was conveyed to my bed; Mrs. Osborn and Delia overwhelmed me with caresses; they declared that without the timely aid of the succours I procured from the house they must have lost the one a dutiful son, the other an affectionate brother; it seems he brought Harriet Leyburn ashore in his arms; she has constantly attended me; and, thank Heaven, envy, that companion of little minds, has not found place in mine; I love her as much as ever I did before she was preferred by Mr. Osborn; may they be happy together when the existence of the poor neglected Charlotte shall be terminated!—I am interrupted.

It was those who had employed my pen; the charming Harriet, by her lively sallies, endeavoured to diffuse cheerfulness, and sometimes a momentary smile rewarded her wish to please; but cruel recollection as quickly recalled the faint harbinger of content, and plunged me back in sorrow. I will fly these interesting scenes; I will fly from

Henry

Henry Osborn's attention, respect, and assiduous friendship; the uncertainty of your stay precludes all idea of a voyage to Teneriffe; but I can go to France; at Montpellier I shall find Lady Juliana Malcomb, and by forcing myself into company amongst strangers, some relief may be obtained from the load that weighs down my spirits. Ah, that you were in England, you would receive with open arms your Charlotte; you would pity a passion that disgraces and consumes her. All that remains of her former self is her attachment to you.

I cannot take leave personally of this family; my feelings would betray me; I shall pass for an ungrateful being, perhaps for one insane; but no matter, my delicacy will be preserved, and my weakness concealed. Adieu.

C. MARSDEN.

D 3

L E T.

LETTER XVII.

MR. STANLEY TO SIR GEORGE EDGECOMB.

MY dear George, give me joy, I am mad; and as some one of your musty authors says, "There is a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know;" but seriously, George—Pshaw, how I hate the word joyfully—then I am married! Now down with the letter, give a long oh! and after a quarter of an hour's mature consideration, learn it is to Miss Morley, man!

Yes my ever esteemed, my valued friend, six weeks ago she condescended to bless the unworthy Stanley with her hand! the smiling Anna has made me the happiest of husbands; and I shall with pride introduce, at our return to England, Mrs. Stanley to that misjudging part of the world who presumed to censure Miss Morley; the propagators of scandal will be hushed to silence, when they view the despised niece of Mrs. Watson, and the neglected child of a thoughtless parent elevated (in all probability before our return) to a rank the
envier

enviers among them of her own sex will pine and sicken at.

She has wrote to the father and aunt ; to the latter all that esteem and gratitude could suggest was dictated by her lively feelings. You will think me uncommonly grave considering my outset, but the subject was my Anna ; every thing that censures her operates like magic upon my soul ; that subject discussed, away with all sententious morals ; welcome nothing but mirth and gaiety we have been in a continual round of dissipation ever since our marriage. The excellent character of Mr. Morley, and the amiable disposition of his niece, have endeared them to the whole island ; and I begin to think, George, I never could be the dissolute wretch your fears used to paint me, otherwise Anna Morley would never have selected me from the numerous train that bowed at her shrine. I now set thee and all thy sage maxims at defiance ; I once shrunk before my friendly censor, and dreaded his sage maxims ; but now another object engages every faculty : Anna is the goddess of my idolatry, and will mould me to her will. May my future years be devoted by assiduous love and tender friendship to make her

amends for the sorrows of her earlier years.

Our marriage was solemnized privately on Mr. Morley's account, but he is now well enough recovered to partake in some of the rejoicings incident to such an occasion; he has admitted me into a lucrative participation in the concerns of the house, yet without hurting the pride of an earl's heir.

Mr. Morley's health obliges him to leave this place for the South of France immediately, and affairs of the utmost consequence will detain me at least three months after him. We had a warm debate about Anna, but at last gratitude won the day, and she accompanies her uncle; indeed he could not well go quite alone, as Mrs. F. Morley is so fond of Teneriffe that no persuasions will induce her to quit it, although her brother has declared his intentions of spending the remainder of his days in Europe. I look forward with pleasure to the period which will bring me again amongst my real friends: as to money, that I knew before I saw Anna Morley; they are remembered only as warnings never to trust them more. I have commenced a real Benedict, and shall not be ashamed to acknowledge without a blush, in the
circles

circles of ton, that I find more real pleasure in the company of Mrs. Stanley and the circle that surrounds her, than I ever did in those of Brookes's or White's.

Think not, George, that I am going to fly society, and become an arrant humdrum; no, my principles alone are changed; my spirits are the same; and I am the same giddy rattling fellow you ever knew me. The former epithet Mr. Stanley can tell you is justly bestowed, as yesterday my want of thought had nearly cost her no less than life. I was driving her in a low kind of cabriole, much used here, and imagined it possible to ascend a mountain, where absolutely nothing but the footsteps of mules or goats had ever before been seen. She warned me of the danger, and I begged her to alight; but being a most extraordinary wife, she insisted if there was danger, of sharing it with me. I drove on with a skill not inferior to a modern Phaeton, but like the ancient one was to be punished for my presumption. A crag in the side of the path luckily wedged in the wheel of our vehicle, and obliged us to descend the mountain less elevated than we ascended it.

Mr. Morley at our return shuddered at the danger of his dear Anna, and assured me that could I have ascended thirty feet higher, the cabriole would have been overturned, and we inevitably dashed to pieces against the rough sides of the mountain.

Mrs. Stanley will perhaps forward this letter to you, as I imagine they will sail with the the first ship. If you see her, you will cease to wonder at the reformation of

Yours,

E. STANLEY.

L E T T E R XVIII.

MR. OSBORN TO MR. MEREDITH.

MY ever attentive friend, if possible attend to my low suit, though perhaps owing to my non-appearance, I may forfeit all I am worth; yet, I abandon it entirely to your management.

I must

I must follow Miss Marsden ; an impulse too irresistible to be controled impels me to it, and whilst I wait for the wind, I will endeavour to account for a conduct so eccentric. You have heard of the accident in the pleasure boat, but do not yet know that it was to Charlotte I owe my life.

The darkness had enveloped us ; the storm increased to an alarming height ; and skill availing nothing, Providence alone could save us. Intent alone to provide for the safety of her I adored, I clasped, as I thought, Miss Marsden in my arms, and awaited some lucky chance to endeavour to get ashore with her ; in vain did I assay to calm her terrors ; loud and unavailing shrieks rent my very soul, the language of persuasive tenderness, of love itself in the moment of danger, lost its force, and her fears seemed to increase with every person that got on shore. In short we were soon left alone, and I was going in despair to commit myself and precious charge to the mercy of the waters, expecting the boat to sink every moment ; when at the very crisis of our fate assistance reached us. I bore the lady almost lifeless to the house, but, gracious God ! instead of my beloved Charlotte, it was
Harriet

Harriet Leyburn. I exclaimed in an agony, Miss Marsden! Where is she? cried Delia, looking round the room, the dear girl, it is to her you owe your present safety. I thought she was with you, said my mother, she followed you from hence. I waited for no more intelligence, but rushed out in the most tremendous night I ever experienced, a servant attended with a lantern, I traversed the lawn leading to the river in a state of mind bordering on distraction; at length extended on the ground, drenched in the falling rain, I found the object of my fond concern; I raised her in my arms; she was insensible, I pressed her to my bosom, life returned, but reason and recollection were no more. I listened to the wild effusions of her burning train, with emotions little short of her own, and by slow degrees conveyed her to the house.

Though scarce able to stand, from fatigue and numbness, I yet would assist Delia and the servants to convey the sweet Charlotte to her apartment: I heard her frequently sigh the name of Osborn. The sweet flatterer, hope, exhilarated my heart, I listened again, but she was then wandering; my spirits were too much exhausted with fatigue
to

to bear this long, and my mother insisted upon my retiring to rest: alas, it was never farther from me!

In a few days they told me she was recovered, but must be kept perfectly quiet, in order to facilitate her entire restoration. A fortnight elapsed, she still kept her chamber. Delia was one morning gone with Harriet Leyburn to return a visit two miles off, my mother was engaged with company, and I strolled into the plantation near our house. Upon entering the rustic temple I saw a letter lie on the table, directed to Miss Osborn: the writing was that of Charlotte. I flew through the plantation, the gate was open, and the fresh traces of a carriage visible. Upon my return to the house, I found it all in confusion; Miss Marsden and her maid had quitted three hours before. Had Delia not been absent, this strange, this inconsistent step would probably never have been thought of.

Her letter has completed my distraction. There is a mystery kept up through the whole of it that alarms me, and I will sacrifice life and fortune, if necessary to restore her the lost peace of mind she complains of.

Surely

Surely Leyburn has not behaved otherwise than a man of honor ought ! Tormenting thought !

In short, my dear Meredith, my intellects will fail their accustomed function, and rambling fancy supply the place of realities if this state of suspense endures much longer. Why did I not candidly avow my partiality, although hopeless of success ? Such a proceeding, accompanied by a proper command of my passions, a resignation to my disappointment would have entitled me at least to her compassion and friendship ; nay, perhaps her confidence, which should I ever obtain, tremble the unthinking mortal who has drawn a sigh from her gentle bosom.

I have enclosed her letter to Delia, that you may behold the reason I have to despair, and yet pursue her. Adieu.

Yours,

E. O.

L E T-

LETTER XIX.

[Left in the Temple.]

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

AMIA BLE Delia, may your generous nature sympathize with and pity the far from happy Charlotte, plead her cause before Mrs. Osborn, excuse whatever may appear to her capricious and rude in the conduct of your friend. In fine, induce her to think favourably of so sudden a retreat from her protection, the reason for which step I could though I ought not to give.

To you, my Delia, what excuse shall I urge? To your unremitting cares I owe my restoration to health, and the highest privilege of human nature——Reason Why do my feelings yet check the workings of ingenuous candour, and prevent me from acknowledging my weakness to her who has treated me with the affection of a sister——hold, rash pen, whither wouldst thou lead me!

Yet mistake not, nor construe the word weakness too harshly; I am not a
guilty

guilty wretch, my sufferings load me not with shame; and I trust the lenient hand of time will heal those wounds of mind. Ah, Delia! oft at the midnight silent hour, when you, unconscious slept, have I stole from my chamber at Sanfon Vale, and traversed each alley of the garden; the silence, the shade, all afforded fresh food to my grief, by their gloomy horrors; visions of imagination, the wild creations of disordered fancy, have afforded me at some moments, the balm of temporary comfort; more composed I have returned to my pillow, and sunk into a transient slumber, but awake with the dawn to all the poignancy of thought. This has been my life for some months; I have weighed well the step I am pursuing, and fly to a distant clime, to regain if possible, my lost peace of mind, as well to avoid living under the same roof with Delia Osborn, a prey to hateful reserve, and a slave to close eyed caution; for to you, my sweet girl, my lips must be for ever closed on the subject which hovers nearest to them. You know not the tenacious disposition of Charlotte; and your gentle pitying nature might lead you to make a discovery, which would render her the unceasing victim
of

of self reproach, but with each rising and setting sun you shall not be forgotten in my prayers; may they be waisted to that beneficent Being who has calmed my rash thoughts in the moment of despair! Write to me often, let me hear of the welfare of your family, and I think I shall be happier. You will soon, I suppose, receive an addition to it, which will not be surely unpleasing.

If I could have trusted my heart, but its emotions would have been too powerful, I would have seen you, my Delia, ere I had quitted Sanfon-Vale. I shall visit the temple, and deposit there my letter. Happy days! when the decorations of that place formed our amusement! now are ye past feeling as the summer gales. How short are the years of happiness, but how tedious are the ages of sorrow! Adieu, my beloved friend, the shores of England will soon be lost to my view; I need not say, remember

Your affectionate

C. M.

Direct to me, *Poste restante à Montpellier.*

L E T-

LETTER XX.

MRS. STANLEY TO MISS OSBORN.

Montpellier.

I Wave all ceremony, my dear Miss Osborn, and as I find we are by report familiarly known to each other, shall make no scruple of writing to you as I would to Miss Marsden ; I am confident you labour under much anxiety on her account, and ere I commence a long narrative, will ease yours and your family's fears, by saying she is perfectly safe, and with us. I shall now acquaint you succinctly of the several events, which facilitated our unexpected meeting.

You have no doubt seen by your papers that I have exchanged the name of Morley for that of Stanley, which ought to prepare you for the grave epistle of a sober matron ; but I do not know whether or not at present I shall be allowed that privilege, as I am a widow bewitched ; imagine to yourself, child, that scarce married two months ere I
quitted

quitted my truly beloved to follow the footsteps of a dear old gouty uncle.

We prepared soon after our marriage to leave Teneriffe. Aunt Fanny expected (who will never I believe quit it) when the unexpected arrival of some vessels rendered my uncle's presence, or some one for him, indispensibly necessary; my dear Ned consequently was obliged to remain, as my uncle's precarious state of health would admit of no delay. I must tell the truth, Delia, for you virgins are generally inquisitive about the sensations of us married folks; why truly then I never was so vexed at any thing in my life, as this unexpected separation; nor was Mr. Stanley less affected. Nothing positively but gratitude could have induced me to it; but throwing gratitude, love, joy and sorrow, &c. far from us, heavy remained my heart after the Peak of Teneriffe disappeared from our sight, till the shore of England was announced; an emotion of pleasure beamed for the first time across my soul, but not a little alloyed to think we were not to set even foot upon it at present. In fine we arrived at Calais, the port of our destination, and were received by a Chevalier de L——, an old friend of my uncle's,

cle's, with great cordiality and hospitality; his lady, one of the best bred women I ever saw, made a grand repast on our account. We had just arisen from table, when several sailors running past the house, which is not far from the port, spoke of an English packet just arrived: curious to see the passengers, the Chevalier and several gentlemen went down upon the beach; I was sitting in a window, which being on the ground floor, was fortunately very low; in a short space of time, the Chevalier returned leading an elegant woman. I gazed at her for some time, and the moment she came near enough to discern features, leaped from the window, leaving part of my muslin gown in the hands of my astonished uncle, who in vain attempted to detain me, and running to the stranger, clasped her in my arms; you need not be told it was Charlotte Marsden; the first emotion of surprise and joy were almost too powerful for us both; when they a little subsided, I led her to my uncle, who, no stranger to her name and character, received her with his usual benevolent warmth; the pleasing though strange meeting had a wonderful effect upon her spirits, and she seemed to have forgot all the melancholy

lancholy her late illness has brought upon her.

She expressed so much disappointment at not seeing Mr. Stanley, that I advised her to take a trip to Teneriffe, and accompany him to Europe. She often shakes her grave head at me, and tells me, I am but a giddy wife. All in good time, child, I shall mend one day or other; the Chevalier de L. would not part with us for some days, and after a long and tedious journey, we arrived the day before yesterday at Montpellier; you may suppose my habitation was easily preferred to that of Lady Juliana Malcomb's; we saw her Ladyship yesterday, I am enchanted with her; what elegance of manners, loveliness of person, and good sense, united in the same being! What a pity so many good qualities should be tinged with that abominable family pride, but it is seen in every word, and she is the only one of the family it does not render perfectly disagreeable.

Charlotte this morning proposed writing to you, but she began with so many heighos and prefatory long faces, that I drove her from the writing-

writing-table, and seated myself in her stead; she desires me to load yourself and Mrs. Osborn with acknowledgements for your kindness, whilst she was at Sanson-Vale; begs pardon for running away, and promises to be a good child in future. By what I can gather from her when she will talk, that is to say, I suppose it will not be improper by this time to wish you joy of your new sister. Harriet Leyburn has few equals; but my partiality must not be blamed if it could point out one superior.

You will think me perhaps strange; but I perfectly approve of Miss Marsden's late conduct, she has confided to me the reason of her precipitate flight, and you will one day know that her silence towards you proceeded not from want of confidence, but a commendable delicacy; I hope ere long to be personally acquainted with one Charlotte commends so highly; she is ever warm in your praise, she tells me you are nearly as grave as herself. Lord help my poor shallow-head, with two such sentimental companions; but a lively disposition will not I hope exclude me from your friendships. Adieu, my dear Miss Osborn;

Osborn ; with compliments to Mrs. Osborn and your brother, I remain sincerely,

Yours,

A. STANLEY.

LETTER XXI.

MISS OSBORN TO MRS. STANLEY.

HOW considerably kind, my dear madam, were you in relieving our anxious fears! how many tears and uneasy hours has the precipitate flight of our Charlotte occasioned my mother and myself.

We, alas! have also another source of trouble, the cause of which you are yet unacquainted with. My brother, madam, that once dutiful son and affectionate brother, has abandoned his home, and left to an uncertain issue, a law-suit on which depends perhaps all he possesses. Ah, Mrs. Stanley, our hearts are nearly broken; affection suggests the most horrid causes for this alarming absence, yet I never knew his honor before capable of being impeached. Mr. Meredith, a friend

friend of our unfortunate Henry, certainly knows where he is, though he affects as deep and impenetrable a reserve as before when he brought mamma a few lines from him, in which he intreated her pardon for any uneasiness his absence might occasion her, but as the whole happiness of his life was at stake, he was assured she would not wish him to escape one effort to attain the completion of his hopes: our whole intelligence is this. I had my hopes, which I forbear to communicate to my mother, lest they should prove, as they have done, abortive, for your letter has destroyed every faint ray.

I thought the strength of his attachment to Miss Marsden might have induced him to follow her, and learn the cause of her avoiding her friends, but had he done so you must have known it: the fair structure of hope fell at once. Alas, how often does it do so through life, the sanguine, the youthful minds, how often are they shocked by the dissolution of their airy dreams.

That it is an improper pursuit which drives my brother from his friends, I have but too just reason to suspect. The world has long thought him an admirer

admirer of Miss Leyburn; but the penetration of an affectionate sister cannot be so soon blinded. He had eyes, he breathed alone for Charlotte, and now how inconsistent, not only to abandon her but his fortune, as his absence at this critical juncture, has so much prejudiced those people that are able to serve him, that Meredith much fears the cause will be inevitably lost.

But let me not in the midst of my family distresses be altogether unmindful of the happiness of my friends. I wish you, my dear Mrs. Stanley, all joy, and trust you will be amply rewarded for all the earlier years of trouble you have experienced.

We are charmed that Charlotte has so fortunately met with you, and hope as her melancholy proceeds alone from her recent illness, it will soon wear off. Lady Juliana I doubt not would have received her with the warm friendship she ever professed, but Lord Malcomb would certainly have rendered her stay with them very unpleasant: I doubt not the society of yourself and Miss Marsden will afford her much satisfaction.

She is much to be pitied, young, beautiful, rich, yet a proud unforgiv-

ing brother opens before her a source of bitter afflictions, jealous of the superior merits of Mr. Campbel, he has irritated a weak father against that amiable young man. I fear Lady Juliana is no more than a prisoner at large amongst the family, her eldest brother will have no pleasure equal to tormenting her, and her father will never have spirit enough to rescue her from ill usage; on Lord Frederic, her younger brother, is all her reliance, he is the reverse of the Viscount, and if any thing can be obtained in Campbel's favour by his exertion, I am sure he may rely upon his good offices. Hasten, my dear Mrs. Stanley, the much desired period of our meeting; tell my dear Charlotte that her mamma Osborn never wanted more her gentle soothings to support her wounded spirit. Ah, why was not she the object of Henry's pursuit, I could have forgiven him the beggary that awaits us, if love for her had occasioned it. My heart is oppressed, bitter tears fall from my eyes. Adieu, my dear madam.

Yours, respectfully,

D. OSBORN.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXII.

MR. MEREDITH TO LORD MALCOMB.

YOU desired me to keep a good watch over your angel. I have not only done so, but have a piece of unexpected intelligence for you——one of the finest fellows in England is distracted for her; I mean Harry Osborn. He thinks me so much his friend, that he communicates every thought to me, and by a proper dash of the sentimentals, I contrive to maintain my ground in his esteem; but I tell my story ill. Miss Marsden has left Mrs. Osborn abruptly, nobody can imagine why, and is gone to your sister, therefore call for your boots, and be off after her. Osborn, like a whining puppy, has followed, and left his all depending, from which having the management intrusted to me, I think I can serve you as thus:

An uncle who had amassed immense riches, died abroad, and having been absent from England many years, left his property to the next of kindred. Mrs. Osborn was his own sister, consequently

sequently Henry becomes his heir. Another claimant however contests it in the person of an illegitimate son. By Harry's generosity he would have been amply provided for, but his mother, ignorant and ill-advised, has been persuaded to contest the whole, and nothing but his sudden absence could have thrown any doubt upon the matter; as it is I do not suppose it will be given against him, but by secreting some papers, I can perhaps render a trip to India absolutely necessary; a voyage will most likely wash love out of his brains, or some of the Asiatic beauties put his constancy to the trial.

Adieu; success attend you with the fair lady. I am going to the faro-table; I had a cursed run of ill-luck last night.

Yours,

J. MEREDITH.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIII.

MR. STANLEY TO MRS. STANLEY.

YOUR pleasing unexpected meeting, my dear Anna, with your amiable friend, afforded me the sincerest pleasure, at least as much as I can possibly enjoy, separated from yourself. The business I remained to settle is finished, and I was proposing this day to fix my departure for Montpelier, when a letter from England arrived, which will hasten my return thither; the contents has filled me with sincere grief, and, mad as you ever knew me, my spirits are almost too much depressed to communicate to you the contents. Death always, I believe, affects alike the grave and gay, and stamps a gloom on the countenance of the most unthinking; but I keep you in suspense. You are not to be told, my beloved wife, that the man whom you have honoured with your confidence and esteem, was once the most dissipated of his sex, and had disobliged, by his repeated follies, the most indulgent of uncles. Parental love I never knew;
E 3 death,

death, at an early period, robbed me of that pleasing tenderness. Lord Harcourt well supplied the deficiency; but his sollicitude had very little effect upon a mind so volatile and insensible to every thing but dissipation and excess. Tired of unavailing remonstrances, he at length insisted I should go abroad; this effectually separated me from companions and abettors of my folly, brought me to a better train of thought, and laid the foundation of a change, my Anna alone could perfect.

Still I digress strangely, and am unwilling to come to the cause of my self-upbraidings; but in fine, my dear Anna, the same vessel which brought me a letter from this excellent uncle, fraught with forgiveness, friendship and fatherly affection, brought also one from Sir George Edgecomb, with an account of his death.

The title and estate will bring little welcome to the breast of my Anna, as they are gained by the loss of one, who when once he had known her virtues, would have loved and respected them.

My presence is absolutely necessary to regulate some affairs; so pressing
indeed

indeed is Edgecomb's summons, that I must not even stop to snatch a look from my beloved, but perhaps if Mr. Morley's health will permit, he will spare her for a few weeks, to meet me either in London, or at Harcourt-Castle.

I hope my Anna will not fear that my return to these scenes of folly and dissipation will have influence enough to make me forget her and my good resolutions, I rather think they will inspire me with disgust. Tell Miss Marsden, as the husband of her Anna, I lay claim to her friendship, and, hope she will honour me with the confidence of a brother. I could wish her to accompany you to England, as she is much known, and I would have my Anna's entrance into the fashionable world to be made with every splendour, in order to check at once the miserable effects of envy, and silence the tongue of detraction. I have not a doubt, if Mr. Morley consents to your coming, but that Sir George Edgecomb will with pleasure conduct you safe to the arms of your adoring

HARCOURT.

LETTER XXIV.

LADY HARCOURT TO MISS OSBORN.

WONDERS! Wonders! my dear Delia, all surprise, and wonder! May my special messenger outstrip the wounded feelings of a deservedly beloved brother, whose very soul bleeds at the distress his precipitation has occasioned at Sanson-Vale, and who himself is hastening to expiate his offences at the feet of an indulgent and forgiving mother. I sincerely hope I may be the first to communicate this happy intelligence to you.

The account of your own and Mrs. Osborn's situation rived the very heart of Charlotte, nor was that of Anna without a pang. Had Lord Harcourt been here, I should certainly have laid my commands on him, like a true knight-errant, never more to behold the face of his fair lady until he had found your recreant brother. I was all emotion, I read it to Mr. Morley, he seemed much moved, and I exclaimed, fly, my dear sir, restore peace

peace to the wounded bosoms of—
Anna, interrupted the dear old man
with a smile, and by a gentle pull
directing my attention to his gouty
shoe, which put an effectual stop to
all thought of his either flying or
turning knight-errant in your behalf.

I sat down to write to you in the
style of condolence, and to assure you
that I had not even heard of your
brother: a fidgeting morning visitor
interrupted me, and kept me in a
restless uneasy state till I had barely
time to dress for dinner at Madame
la Presidente Du——'s, a most charm-
ing woman, and whose house is the
general receptacle of good company.
In the evening her doors were thrown
open, and Charlotte and myself heard
with pleasure Lady Juliana Malcomb
announced; her disagreeable brother
the Viscount accompanied her. Lady
Juliana seemed much hurt at the news
of my sudden departure; for like an
obedient wife I must go when my
good man requests, but quite charm-
ed at the idea of Charlotte's staying
with Mr. Morley. I never saw any
thing more lovely than Lady Juliana
looked that evening. Envy, avaunt!
henceforth I defy thee! why should

not one woman allow perfections to another. Lord Malcomb you may be sure did not leave us long, as Charlotte was of the party. Indeed so much did his impertinence disturb her, that I resolved to do a very good-natured action, and relieve both her and his sister. I therefore challenged him to make a party at one of the tables just forming. Politeness induced him to comply though I make no doubt he wished me fast in the old gentleman's claws for my pains. The conversation of Madame la Presidente, as we were quitting our party, also did not please him so much as it did me; she begged his deux belles Angloises would not engage themselves, but reserve their hands at the opening of the ball for two accomplished cavaliers of their own nation; one of them continued she, is elegance itself, he arrived but last night, and meeting accidentally with Monsieur le President, he renewed a former acquaintance with him, and was introduced this morning at my toilet. The two grave little hypocrites received this piece of intelligence with the most perfect indifference you ever beheld, while I, but do not tell my
Edward,

Edward, was all coquettish flutter, stretched out my neck every moment to behold this phoenix, and sat on the very edge of curiosity to behold him. Charlotte, stood at the back of my chair, I looked at her, she seemed not to be in the least anxious; the ball will be very late, said I; — I shall not dance, was the reply.

A little bustle drew my eyes upon a very elegant young man who just entered; this must be him, thought I, but before I could scarce tell whether he was tall or short, Charlotte gave me such an unmerciful pinch by the arm, I thought I should have shrieked, but the words, it is Mr. Osborn, effectually restored me to recollection, though I believe every one else thought me entirely deprived of it. I flung down my cards, and pretending sudden indisposition, left them and the accomplished Viscount to a good-natured old woman who accepted them willingly. Well I did, for —, but I must not tell tales, but proceed to inform you that I made no scruple of introducing myself to your brother. He was very grave at first, and I make no doubt wondered what forward chit wanted to fasten herself on him. Would you credit

credit it, Charlotte could scarce speak to him, so overpowered was she with surprise. I then engaged Mr. Osborn of our party, to the great mortification of the ladies and the Viscount, who having finished the party, seemed wholly employed in watching the glances of your brother; after his journey, you need not be told to whom they were directed. We all declined dancing, and the conversation soon became general and lively.

Mercy & poor Ned, had I seen Harry Osborn previous to a certain—have and to hold, &c.———but as it is, our chains may rattle, but we must still jog on as contented as we can.

This morning your brother breakfasted with us, and as Mr. Morley does not rise early, we perused a trio, not a very gay one. Have not you, Delia, sometimes felt in the way positively I did? and after the breakfast table was removed, went very dutifully to enquire after my uncle, and then all this mighty business was discussed. The man is really reasonable enough, Delia, if you would all of you think so, he has fulfilled scripture, in leaving mother, sister, house and land, to follow

follow the possessor of his heart. After waiting a decent time I returned; Charlotte had been in tears, and your brother was leaning over the back of the sofa, to disguise his yet visible emotion.

I felt an intruder, Delia, and would have retired, could I have done it unseen; but that was impossible. Your brother advanced, and taking my hand, Lady Harcourt, said he, some excuse is certainly necessary for the abruptness of my departure; but I have disregarded the claims of duty, the tears of maternal tenderness have flowed in vain for me; I have justified myself to Miss Marsden, I am satisfied I shall this day quit Montpelier. Apologize for me, to those whose politeness has favoured me with notice. I hasten to expiate my faults at the feet of my mother, he bowed upon my hand, and approached Miss Marsden. Here all his firmness forsook him, his voice faltered. He rose to bid him adieu, dissolved into tears and reclined upon his arm. We must part, cried he. But not for long, interrupted your meddling Anna. I shall never forget his expressive look, "perhaps
for

for ever——at this moment I may be a beggar.” Finishing these words he hurried out of the house, leaving me struck with surprize; but Charlotte soon explained the meaning of his words. The declaration so necessary to his happiness, once made, he recollected his critical situation, the uncertain issue to which he had left his fortune exposed, the loss of which would hinder all his airy dreams of happiness from taking place. He has told Charlotte how much he adores her; but at the same time resigned all pretensions to her, if his law-suit proves unfavourable. This may be honourable; but it is devilish provoking. I am very angry with Charlotte, and have scolded her well, for not offering him her hand and fortune at once. She is not however in the least displeased at his visit to Montpelier, though rather low spirited at present; this she *kindly* attributes to *my departure*. I expect every instant Sir George Edgecomb, a friend of my husband’s, who is to form part of my travelling equipage to Harcourt-Castle, from which place I shall send off some of my knights in waiting, to summon Delia Osborn
to

to our peerless presence. Present respects to Mrs. Osborn. Adieu, chere amie.

Yours ever,

A. HARCOURT.

LETTER XXV.

LADY JULIANA MALCOMB TO LADY HARCOURT.

HOW kind, my dear Anna, are you, in so frequently writing to me; and what a happiness is it for Juliana, that the amiable Miss Marsden is still at Montpellier. Deprived of my two friends, I know not how I should support existence, as the persecution of my brother continues with the utmost violence. What can I have done to cause it! Lord Ormeston has followed us hither, and is supported to the utmost by the Viscount. My father's very weak state of body has affected his intellects so much, that I have

no

no resource in him. Alas, how mistaken in their notions are the unthinking part of the world! they imagine rank can give or create happiness; yet, my dear Anna, behold in me an example of their inefficacy; I sigh in secret for a more humble station, and envy the very servant that attends me. I have received a letter from Mr. Campbell, he expostulates much on my too easily believing reports to his prejudice, and vindicates his conduct in every point respecting my brother in a manly and spirited manner. Ah, had he the least occasion for such a vindication? That dreadful night, what were not my alarms, my apprehensions for him once! Certain of my brother's safety, my fears all rested upon his danger; not one friendly voice to whisper comfort to me, not even one who dared put me out of torturing suspense, so strictly had the domestics been charged not to mention the name of Campbell before me.

I have written to him, and intreated he will be patient, nor expect me ever to act derogatory to the character I have hitherto supported in life; a disobedient daughter can never be a wife either beloved or esteemed; and there is but one

one circumstance in life can ever make me quit the roof of my father.

I cannot help seeing that Lord Ormeston follows me through some preconcerted scheme of my brother, and rather than be compelled to a hateful marriage, I will seek shelter with some friend, whose character can protect mine; but in that case, Campbell shall not even know where I am, or if he does, shall he ever see me. I shall acquaint him with my resolution; he knows when once made, it is not easily shaken.

Harrassed thus on every side, my only relief is the company of Miss Marsden; she pities me, and devotes much of her time to me.

As we have heard from you from Paris, Calais and Dover, we cannot reasonably expect letters till you are quite recovered the fatigues of your voyage. May Harcourt-castle, and the master of it afford my Anna every happiness.

J. MALCOMB.

L E T.

LETTER XXVI.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

N O more shall my charming friend accuse me of reserve ; I never had but one cause and that now exists no longer.

Yet the pain of my bosom is not wholly removed ; its effects only are altered, an obstacle is arisen to prevent my adding the endearing name of sister to that of friend, but yet I ought, I must be content. Henry Osborn has told me, that life itself is not dearer to him than the happiness of Charlotte Marsden ; and yet he will sacrifice both to prejudice and punctilio.

My fortune is not splendid, but it is sufficient ; and why will your brother, who covets not riches for himself, seek after treasures for a woman who despises them.

Say every thing esteem ought to dictate to your mother ; tell her how grateful I am for the friendship with which she honours me, and her proposal, but I cannot yet return to England. I am a poor philosopher, and at present do
not

not bear reflection well, nor will the precarious state of my health admit of my plunging in dissipation to avoid it.

I am sorry I cannot give a more favorable account of Lady Juliana; her father is confined to his room, and she endures all that malice and ill-nature can suggest, from a brother who really wishes to seclude her from society. Lord Frederic has quarrelled with him upon her account, and I find leaves Montpellier in consequence. I yesterday went to see her, and was shewn into the breakfast room; the Viscount, Lord Frederic and Lord Ormeston were present. Lord Malcomb told me he was very sorry, but his sister was too ill to see company. The shock visible in my countenance, alarmed them all, and Lord Frederic advancing, led me to a chair, and seating me, begged I would be composed, that the task was an irksome one to expose the failings of his family, but in order to put an end to the concern yet too visible in my face, he must acquaint me that his sister's illness arose solely from being told, that her father was incapable of guiding either her or himself, and had therefore resigned the management of both to his eldest

eldest son. You know, madam, continued he, the use he will make of such authority.

I cast a contemptuous look on the Viscount, and exclaimed with energy, may God and man unite to protect her. I turned with indignation from the wretch. He would have soothed and flattered me; and giving my hand to the deserving Frederic, quitted the house abruptly. He accompanied me home, and urged me strongly not to be easily repulsed, but endeavour to see and serve his sister; he advises much her quitting his father, provided she has proper protection; being totally dependent, he cannot assist her himself; he has promised to be the bearer of this; they should have contrived family business in order to send him to England. I err if I surmise he will prove not an unwelcome visitor to my Delia; the warmth of his praises give me reason to suppose indifference subsists not between them.

The Viscount has made many attempts to see me, but I despise him too much to treat him with common civility. I imagine you have, ere this, seen Lady Harcourt

court. You know my sentiments of her, therefore I shall not enlarge upon it.

C. MARSDEN.

LETTER XXVII.

LADY HARCOURT TO MISS MARSDEN.

SO, Charlotte, I find Delia has begun to tell you her first introduction at Harcourt-Castle; but as an unlucky intruder, called a wife, I can probably give you some curious particulars the shy girl has omitted. True turtle as I was, I measured my husband's impatience by my own, and hastened away from Dover, where I parted with Sir George, little imagining how far inconstancy could carry man in a short time.

Fatigued to death with bad roads and post horses, I arrived at Harcourt-Castle, and the instant the chaise stopped, sprung out in the hall, I met his lordship's valet; the man stared and opening his mouth, exclaimed, good God,
my

my lady ! Yes, Griffiths, where is your master ! I thought he impeded my passage, and looked terrified. Silly fool ! I imagined ten thousand misfortunes ; painted my lord ill, dying nay perhaps dead. Wild with fears I passed the astonished valet with the utmost celerity and crossed several rooms in a shocking perturbation of mind, wholly ignorant of the path I kept on, till at length I discerned through a half open door, the flowing gown of an elegant woman seated upon a sofa, and springing forward, discerned a sight, Charlotte, that almost rivetted me to the ground, namely Lord Harcourt at her feet. All my natural vivacity, the satisfaction I had flattered myself so quick a compliance with his wishes would have given my husband, vanished ; my whole frame seemed to undergo a total change, and I never knew till then that I so fondly loved Lord Harcourt. Resentment for the supposed injury had little place in my bosom ; it was the thorn of anguish deeply planted : the relief of tears was denied me, I turned from the view which had so suddenly destroyed my peace, but unable to reach a chair, I leaned against the wall, pale, and almost motionless. The rustling I made occasioned a shriek from the lady. Mistaking the cause and forgetting the reason I had

to

to detest her, I rushed forward; Lord Harcourt was still on his knees, and the lady endeavouring to free her hand from his eager grasp.

Scarce had I tottered within the door, when reflecting, that by thus surprising him in his follies, I might widen instead of repair the breach this discovery must occasion and overcome; by the feelings which must agitate the bosom of every wife on such an occasion, I fainted on the floor. Delia tells me, that from that moment she believes she was as much forgot, as if such a being had never existed: so easily are some affections changed. But I must not reflect, all is forgiven, and I value my own peace more than to disturb it by useless repetitions.

When I recovered my senses, I was not a little pleased at the tender concern mingled with alarm, still visible on the countenance of Lord Harcourt, and charmed with the elegant assiduity of the object of his adorations. Though truth to say, the elegance of her form was not calculated to divest my bosom as instantaneously of every jealous pang. As my indisposition abated, our embarrassments increased.

My guilty husband threw himself carelessly on a sofa, trying in vain to hide
his

his confusion, while the lady sat near me in great agitation. Her tears, the shriek which alarmed me, all conspired to prove her virtuous. Her present emotions were not those of guilt but of delicate injured innocence. I was the first who broke this painful silence; I took her hand and begged her to be composed, that I was far from harbouring a suspicion that could afflict her. She pressed my hand, and thanked me with a sweet smile of expressive sensibility. I caught her to my bosom. Lord Harcourt started up and would have left the room, but I stopped him; leave me not, cried I, a prey to distress, suffer me to reconcile you to yourself, my dear Edward; your candour, your generosity will not condemn me for a discovery not the effect of suspicions mean jealousy, but unexpected chance. Help me, continued I, lovely unknown, to restore peace to the bosom of my husband by according him your pardon.

He held my hand; ingenuous shame and deep remorse were painted on his countenance. I certainly, said the lady, at your request, madam, pardon this outrage, but must beg, Sir George, as the hand you offered me is already given

to

to this amiable lady, that you will render me worthy of her friendship, by accounting to her for the reason of my being here at so improper a time. He paused. You shall be satisfied, Miss Osborn; I have quite terrified the poor man, broke the thread of his grave speech, and the humble mortified look gave place to surprize at my scream. Delia, my love, why did not some kind genius whisper, that my rival was the dear girl I was so impatient to see—I am Anna the friend Miss Marsden has so often mentioned at Sanson-Vale. Upon my honour, Charlotte, I have laughed many times since at the whimsical figures my good Lord and his Dulcinea exhibited at this farther denouement. Indeed I could not help it then, though the tears were yet on my cheek. After a moment Lord Harcourt came to me, my dear Anna, what shall I say to palliate my folly, I am overwhelmed with confusion, but——. I interrupted him by holding out my hand smiling good-naturedly on the poor devil (excuse the epithet, it slipped out unawares) and condescendingly uttered a few conciliatory phrases.

Mercy on me! what a torrent followed, of love, gratitude, and adoration!

I really, Charlotte, must lay aside the amiable for a little time, and assume more consequence, for the fellow presumes so much upon my *charming disposition*, that he carries every point his own way. Oh, these men! how they can flatter and deceive. Thoughtless as I am by nature, the recollection of the foregoing circumstance, often gives birth to a sigh, I endeavour to stifle. Alas, every woman may not prove a Delia Osborn, and notwithstanding his present partiality, if secure from detection, the affections of Lord Harcourt may be again estranged, and your Anna rendered miserable. Distracting thought, and base suspicions hence away! My runaway pen is often apt to digress instead of finishing what it first sets off with.

I forget that all this while poor Delia's character is uncleared, and her visit to Harcourt-Castle unaccounted for; you may remember she called him Sir George, this had not escaped my observation, and when our first bustle was over, and peace restored, I made Sir George one of my best curtsies, and desired to know what name in future I was to have the honour of bearing. Saucy this enough, considering how humble the

the man then was. Miss Osborn smiled ; my Lord blushed, and after a moment's pause, related his doughty plot. It seems he had twice seen Miss Osborn at the farm whither she had come from Sanson-Vale, for change of air, after an illness. Mrs. Osborn knowing the people, did not think it necessary to accompany her. My worthy peer never thought it requisite to enquire her name, or who she was, meaning only a little temporary flirtation, although he chose to conceal his own under the assumed one of his friend Sir George Edgecomb. The farmer being told that his Honour's designs were strictly honourable, facilitated his access to the lady, who rejected every offer with disdain, and purposed returning home ; a chaise was procured and the farmer accompanied it by way of guide ; close to the avenue leading to Harcourt Castle, the post-boy stopped, and alighting, pretended to examine the wheels of the chaise, and drawing out one of the pins, declared he could not proceed till somebody went to the next town for a wheelwright. The farmer pretended great concern, but proposed as there was none but servants at Harcourt-Castle, that Miss Osborn and her maid should walk thither,

whilst he made over to the next town, which was ten miles. He accordingly alighted, and served as conductor to the Castle, whither Delia said she made the less scruple of going, as she knew it now belonged to owners, with whom she should soon be acquainted; the servants treated her with great respect, shewed her into an apartment, in which she had not been seated many moments, before her persecutor entered. She started, and felt the situation forcibly into which she had been betrayed. His Lordship at first endeavoured to soothe her, but finding all he could urge ineffectual, determined to make the only amends then in his power, by restoring her himself to the farm; my entrance terminated an affair which my thoughtless husband had not foreseen would have ended so disagreeably to himself; he avowed the whole transaction to Sir George Edgecomb, who has wrote him a trimming answer to his letter, and I have the satisfaction to find that worthy friend perfectly satisfied with the part I have acted. Lord Harcourt is all tenderness and gratitude; he declares he never ceased to love me, but was hurried away by the impulse of the moment.

We

We go to London to-morrow, and I have persuaded Delia to accompany us. I could not for some time prevail upon the dear serious girl, but her mother joined my earnest entreaty, and the petition was granted. I imagine even the quiet Charlotte begins to lose her patience, that I have wrote such an enormous letter about the sister, without once mentioning the brother; he is not forgot. I am sorry to say he looks as wretched as ever any poor embarrassed lover did in the world, he talks strongly of an India Voyage. Had he been less precipitate, or rather, had he never seen Charlotte Marsden, there would probably have been no occasion; his absence upon a late decision has undone him, and at this moment his all hangs upon a balance; even the fortunes of his mother and sister are involved by this expensive litigation; and should his researches in India tend to prove his uncle's marriage with the woman who opposes his claim, all will be a blank. Nor will I flatter my sweet friend with even a distant hope, that the proud and indigent Osborn will accept her hand if deprived of the means of making her a settlement equivalent to her fortune. He will never be ano-

ther's, and I depend upon the good sense my dear Charlotte is mistress of, being exerted, to bear with fortitude those evils she cannot prevent. Do not forget to say every thing the kindest sympathy can dictate to Lady Juliana; I have seen her brother Lord Frederic; his eyes tell tales when directed to Delia. I rally, scold, quarrel, do all I can to obtain the secret, but get nothing more than a gentle sigh, and the fruits of my own observations. I think ere this you must have seen Campbell. Sir George Edgecomb, at the request of his mother, is gone after him to prevent mischief. From Campbell's acting in direct opposition to Lady Juliana's wishes, I imagine he thinks the resolution of a woman not much to be relied upon; pray heaven in this instance he may not be deceived; she will certainly never carry a pique so far as to throw herself into the arms of a known villain, a disgrace to his family, and a blot on the rank of nobility.

The good Viscount and Lord Ormeston may congratulate themselves they have not Anna to deal with; paternal authority I would acknowledge, even to enthusiasm, but that woman must possess a weak mind, weak even to a fault,

fault, who suffers herself to be made a *fraternal Victim*. The distinctions proper to be made are very obvious; the care, the tenderness, the affections of a brother, are one of the many blessings providence has to bestow, but such a brother as the Viscount, is a shame to the character of a man, and unworthy the alliance of such a sister.

Tell Mr. Morley I am impatient to see him; his destined apartment wants its inhabitant, and nothing can so much augment my happiness as his presence and yours. Adieu, my dear Charlotte, believe me with sincerity

Yours,

A. HARCOURT.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

LORD HARCOURT TO SIR GEORGE
EDGEComb.

IN order to convince you how truly repentant I remain for late errors, transgressions, &c. I begin by thanking you for your friendly though severe epistle; the correction was dictated by the warmth of a benevolent and upright heart, a heart which surely some uncommon occurrence of domestic life must have tended to meliorate, enlighten, and render one of the worthiest ever given to dignify, and at the same time befriend human nature.

Lady Harcourt thinks your strictures too severe upon a late event, but after the proof she has recently given, you will not be surpris'd at any new display of her angelic goodness. By my soul Edgecomb, with any other woman domestic happiness would have been no more; a haughty demeanour, a countenance clouded by contempt and frowns, would have justified in my opinion, more frequent imprudencies, but her unfeigned grief, her ill-requit-
ed

ed love, and her trembling tears, at a moment when rage would in many have deafened every other sensation than the dread of displeasing the man who had madly forgot her merits, pleaded powerfully in my bosom, and added tenfold to the sense I began to feel of the offence I had offered to Miss Osborn's delicacy. Her distress had operated in her favour together with spirited replies to my insulting love. I hope from my soul, George, that every puppy as conceited of their own all-subduing powers as I have been, will ever meet, in similar circumstances, with similar mortification.

If the dear girls would always keep up that proper consequence and dignified pride, which without either haughtiness, or prudery, every modest woman ought at times to display, they might awe the most determined libertine, with a single glance, and wives like mine would reform, even the most abandoned; never shall I forget my own feelings, or the interesting figure of Lady Harcourt, when turning my head at a sudden noise, I beheld her sinking to the ground; overwhelmed with the feelings of an affectionate, and injured wife; her behaviour ever since,

has elevated her as much as degraded me. She will never admit of a retrospect, the same sweet smile beams upon her face, as cheerfully as the day on which she blest me with the title of her husband. I often gaze at her, and wonder how I could for a moment forget such a woman. We are just arrived in the metropolis; all is hurry, noise, and confusion. Anna has been introduced to most of my relations; they are all charmed with her in public; with them she is the woman of rank, the arbitress of fashion, followed and admired by the crowd; at home the affectionate friend, and endearing wife.

Miss Osborn is with us; I fear the impatience of her brother has much straitened her mother and herself, in point of circumstances. He is a noble fellow, and as I hate the compassion which spends itself in words, I will serve him to the utmost limits of my power. My insulting love for his sister is turned into the sincerest esteem for the whole family, and I cannot be at ease unless something is done to render them once more independent. Think not, George, I would offend their delicacy, but surely Lady Harcourt might with propriety offer Miss Osborn

Osborn a genteel settlement. Send me your opinion upon the subject. I must quit my pen and friend to attend the calls of duty; I yesterday took my seat with the customary oaths, and to-day at the particular instance of Lord H——g I shall be at the house. I am no party man, Edgecomb. Possessed of affluence, interest has no sway, and if sometimes led astray by the error of the moment, mature reflection may enable me to amend it; unbiassed by prejudice, unawed by popular judgment, I hope to maintain the true dignity and independence which a British peer ought to possess.

I make my bow at the levee, but it is not the servile cringe of the fawning courtier, but the tribute of unfeigned respect I bear my excellent sovereign; I would serve him with my life, and will support him in every patriotic measure. Let every member of each party lay his hand to his heart and say the same. The independent member is the general friend of mankind. That England may possess many such is the hope and wish of

Yours,

HARCOURT.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIX.

MISS MARSDEN TO MR. OSBORN.

A N D did you really imagine that Charlotte was either too proud or too prudish (for so I must construe your expression) to answer your letters? Or did you think every spark of feeling had flown from her breast? Surely my emotion when we parted was too undisguised not to be noticed. Did it not sufficiently betray the interest I took in your happiness? Oh, Mr. Osborn, if that moment did not convince you, the tears your last letter has drawn from my eyes probably will—"We must separate, and perhaps for ever." The surprise is dreadful, even should it concern a person one scarcely knows; but when applied to a friend, is distressing beyond measure. Ah, if a doubt yet harbours in your bosom, the tears I shed over your last letter, are sufficient to remove it.

You hint that your mother's spirits are hurt at the prospect of your departure, and the absence of your sister, whose

whose return she will not hear of. But you do not tell me that she wishes for me; why not use that freedom, and bid me haste to soothe the anguish of maternal fears. But tell her, ere long I will, unbidden, haste to convince her that her affectionate regard shall meet the return it merits; but my departure from hence must be regulated by yours; a farewell would be too distressing; we have recently experienced it, and the revival of such emotions would be too painful for either to sustain.

I am perhaps too free, but surely to the unblemished honour of Mr. Osborn, and to the dreadful idea of a last parting much may be allowed. I therefore chide away all reserve, and give free vent to the overflowing of an affectionate and undissembled disposition; why should we add to the pangs of absence by ill-timed caution and ungenerous distrust.

You repeat, you are miserable, you bid me comfort you. Ah, why do you compel me to say it is yourself alone that causes the ills of which you complain. I am not ambitious, the pleasures of domestic life are all I wish for; the fond partiality of a friend has furnished me liberally with the gifts of fortune,

fortune, and with whom can I so well share them as with the man who has abandoned every consideration for me.

Excuse my touching on so delicate a theme, perhaps I ought not, but I fear, from the expences naturally arising from this unfortunate suit, that your revered mother and my beloved Delia may be also sufferers. Lay aside then I intreat you, every thought that may contribute to aggravate their sufferings or your own, and freely command the fortune of the woman favoured with your esteem.

C. MARSDEN.

LETTER XXX.

SIR GEORGE EDGECOMB TO LORD HARCOURT.

Mor:pellier.

IN obedience to the dictates of humanity and friendship, my good friend, I date from this healthful abode. Campbell, well convinced
of

of the delicacy of his situation, was very happy in my company, it gives some little sanction he thinks to his appearance at Montpellier. We travelled very quick, and arrived about five o'clock the day before yesterday.

Our first enquiry you will naturally suppose was concerning the Malcomb family, and through the means of Campbell's valet, a sharp intelligent fellow, we obtained information, that Lady Juliana and her brother were to be that evening at Madame de H—'s, it being that lady's public night; and Campbell having visited her when making a former tour, he was obstinately bent upon going; we therefore dressed with all possible expedition, and got there about half past seven. Lady Juliana and Miss Marsden were together. The reception of our friend was far from what he expected it: true to her word, Lady Juliana rose in displeasure, upon his accosting her, and without deigning to hear a word in his favour, left the assembly in all the pride of offended beauty. In vain did Miss Marsden, with that amiable benignity and female softness which are so distinguishingly her characteristics, endeavour to mediate. Upon that subject she would not hear
even

even her. As they left the room Miss Marsden, to my great surprise, seemed in earnest conversation with that scandal to nobility the Viscount; nay, she even gave him her hand, smiled upon him, and seemed anxious to please him. I should be sorry to impute either coquetry or a love of general admiration to a woman whom fame is so lavish in praising, and whose exterior form seems truly adapted for the receptacle of every virtue; but why that smile? was it necessary for a being whose family alone intitles him to the least respect?

The next morning we received a card from Mr. Morley, requesting our company to dinner. Miss Marsden received us with her usual politeness, and as soon as the servants were withdrawn, she led to the occurrences of the preceding night, and pursued the subject with that energetic warmth, I have heard Lady Harcourt so often admire. She vindicated Lady Juliana's conduct, drew an affecting picture of her situation, and blamed Campbell's precipitation. I thought it impossible he could listen to her without conviction, but love, and the dread of irretrievably losing his mistress, rendered him for some time inflexible, either as to leaving
Mont-

Montpellier, or desisting from hazarding upon any terms an interview; but Miss Marsden assuring him that she then addressed him by desire of Lady Juliana, who had commissioned her to repeat her resolution to persevere in her determination, and deprive him of even the shadow of hope if he did not immediately quit Montpellier, he began to reflect, and after some little inward contrition, natural I believe to every man upon relinquishing a favorite point, he agreed to be persuaded, and to-morrow we leave the town, not quite in such great haste as we made to reach it. We mean to spend a few weeks at the Marquis de Rochelle's, a friend of mine, who has a charming chateau about six leagues from hence. Campbell is the more easily induced, as he can often hear how things are likely to continue here.

After all I think Lady Juliana evinces a great share of weakness as well as pride; had she from the first approved the artifices of her brother, and exerted that proper spirit of resentment naturally arising from such a conduct, he might have been intimidated from going such lengths. In short, my dear friend, from all I can learn, it is likely

ly this affair will be productive of disagreeable consequences to all concerned.

A circumstance is whispered about here which has exasperated Campbell almost beyond the power of reason: Lady Juliana has ever been reported in the world an immense fortune. The truth is, she has but ten thousand pounds independent of her father, who has always said he would give her fourscore thousand more; but Lord Ormeston finding his suit to the lady ineffectual, changed his battery, and offered the old earl to take her with half her intended fortune. So great an addition to his own expectations rendered the Viscount a warm advocate, and as the Earl, notwithstanding his imbecility, still harbours his darling passion avarice, Lord Ormeston has so far obtained his wish, that he is admitted to persecute the lady wherever he chuses.

His character not being so notoriously known here, he is caressed by means of his title and money, and looks upon himself with no little consequence; he made me a visit, ceremony demanded it, but as our dispositions and ideas were never in union, it was pleasingly short; I dared not trust my
feelings

feelings to mention the Malcomb family; I detest the idea of a man of his years and principles compelling a beautiful and virtuous young woman to sacrifice the prime of her days to his sensuality and capricious infidelity.

But, my dear Ned, are you not displeased that I have yet scarce mentioned Lady Harcourt? You are a lucky fellow to possess such an invaluable treasure, and could you find me a Charlotte or an Anna, I might be tempted to commence benedict as well as yourself, but I rally upon an event which never can arrive; my affections lie buried in this country, nor ever shall I behold the object capable of again reviving them with all their wonted ardour. At some not far distant period I will make Lady Harcourt and yourself acquainted with the distressing event which, prior to our knowledge of each other, effectually deprived me of happiness; and will fully account for these little absences of mind your Anna has often so agreeably rallied. I would then have related my sad tale, but the recollection always unmans me, and my pen can often perform the task my tongue refuses.

I am glad you have exerted yourself
in

in favour of our friend Harry, he is a noble fellow, and I hope his voyage will succeed.

You ask my advice respecting his family; your intention is laudable; but nothing, my lord, in the nature of a settlement can, consistent with my ideas of propriety, be offered, without greatly wounding their delicacy. Mrs. Osborn's income is I know at present much circumscribed, but as Miss Marsden at her return to England, which will be speedily, means to reside with them that will make some difference; notwithstanding, my dear Ned, you need not be told, that there is a manner of presenting useful presents, that does not pain the receiver. But why suggest a thing to you which I am sure Lady Harcourt alone is capable of executing; and I know her too well to doubt of its being already done.

I suppose town begins to fill; I could wish to return by the meeting of parliament, but believe it will be impossible, consistent with what I have undertaken. Tell your Anna I miss her charming society, the company of a fighting lover not being well calculated to enliven a man frequently himself a prey to the deepest melancholy. Pre-
sent

sent a thousand compliments to her and Miss Osborn, tell them Montpellier wants but their presence to be charming beyond description ; it is very full at present and the croud tolerably genteel. I have recognized many of my Parisian friends, and could have passed some time very agreeably. Adieu.

Yours ever,

G. EDGECOMB.

LETTER XXXI.

MR. OSBORN TO MISS MARSDEN.

MY adored Charlotte's generosity overwhelms me with grateful sensations, and adds afresh to every tender sentiment her merit has already inspired in my breast ; but honour forbids me, my Charlotte, I cannot take an unjust advantage of the preference you favour me with, and suffer you to bestow your fortune on a beggar,

gar; nor could your refined feelings bear the stigma with which the world would brand your Osborn's want of delicacy. The tears of Charlotte, are the highest tribute of affection she can bestow; to love him who adores her is not a sentiment unworthy of her, but it must be his care to prevent her ever having occasion to blush for the object of her choice. But let us yet cherish hope, happiness may yet be ours; secured by the kind assurances of my beloved Miss Marsden that no one shall supplant me in her esteem, I embark to-morrow for the distant shores in India.

I was almost unmanned, the pen dropped from my fingers. Oh, Charlotte, 'tis an awful moment, to leave behind every tie that can render life supportable, to be obliged by rectitude to forego that inestimable hand, which, had I the world, I should think too valuable to be purchased. Can any feelings be so acute as mine? yes my heart tells me; nor accuse it in a moment like this, of vanity, that your sensibility is equally wounded.

Be assured, that the knowledge of my being dear to you could alone support me.

You

You have, ever kind, ever considerate, anticipated our wishes; my mother would not suffer me to suggest your return, she was so well convinced of your goodness, as to be certain of an immediate compliance with her wish; and she could not bear the idea of shortening those pleasurable moments, we flatter ourselves you enjoy at Montpellier; but as the proposal is yours, she bids me say every thing that affection and impatience to behold her dear, her beloved adopted child can dictate.

Ah, Charlotte, this idea awakens again every half-stifled emotion. How shall I quit a place where you are so soon to be, without a word, a look? but your idea is just, a parting scene would be agony realized; do not be afraid my mother will suffer any pecuniary want, she is noble, and does not reproach the rash impatience that will deprive her for some time at least, of her accustomed affluence; she is cheerful under every misfortune, and only laments that she cannot yet call her beloved Charlotte, daughter. Hasten, amiable girl, to make this generous woman happy. Remember, that to-morrow your Henry must bid her a long adieu, and that his
mother

144 JULIANA ORMESTON: OR,
mother will be cheerless till you re-
turn.

Yours affectionately,

H. OSBORN.

L E T T E R XXXII.

MISS MARSDEN TO LADY HARCOURT.

YOUR lively letter, my dear friend, has, I ingenuously confess, been unanswered, and neglected much longer than it deserved; but I have been of late unfit for writing. The news of Mr. Osborn's departure for India, though expected, almost overwhelmed me; but assured of his affection, I can now bear his absence with composure: he ought not to have been so proud, for the sake of his mother, whose maternal fears will cause her to suffer acutely during his long and dangerous voyage; but as all arguments would have been ineffectual, I must of course submit. I mean to set out to-morrow on my return to England,
and

and shall take up my abode at Sanson-Vale; never will I quit the dear inhabitant, but to pay a short visit now and then to my Anna. I am happy that Delia is with you; she is calculated for the meridian of fashion; the accomplishments she is mistress of, and the elegance of her person and manners, render her deservedly the object of admiration, and I can almost forgive Lord Harcourt's delusion, as it had her for the cause. Saucy creature, how you treated him. But seriously, my dear friend, I trembled for you, I dreaded that even the merits of Anna might have been insufficient to recall his wandering affections; but it is impossible to describe how much I was rejoiced to find you, on the contrary, by your exemplary conduct, raised in his opinion.

Too frequently, I fear, unhappiness in the married state arises from a want of maturely forgiving the errors of each other. A deviation so quickly acknowledged, and earnestly repented of as Lord Harcourt's, certainly laid claim to forgiveness and oblivion, but the more to your merit. I must acknowledge it my opinion, that few wives, good or bad, would so readily have grant-

ed it, whatever they might have been induced to do from time and persuasion.

I have now some news for you: my travelling companions you will wonder at, no others, my dear, than Lord Malcomb's family; his Lordship is much better, and business requires him in the north. I was undetermined, whether I should travel with them, so much do I detest the Viscount, but the following circumstance has determined me.

I called this morning upon Lady Juliana, who has been much confined, and very ill treated, in consequence of Mr. Campbell's appearance at the assembly. The Viscount could not decently refuse me admittance, as that would have deprived him forever of any plea for urging his odious passion, but I perceived he did it with infinite reluctance.

I found the Fraternal Victim, as you emphatically called her, literally in dishabille, and looking so extremely ill, that she had no occasion to tell me she had passed a cruel night. I told her, that pursuant to her wishes Mr. Campbell had left Montpellier; I told her how much I felt for her delicate situation; but at the same time, begged her

her to mitigate something of her severity towards the man I was certain she preferred to all others. I had but little trouble in making poor Campbell's peace, and obtained four lines for him, which ought to make him easy, if he is not very unreasonable. I left her tolerably cheerful, after suffering some persecution from the Viscount, who was so elated by the prospect of conducting me to England, that he even begged her pardon before me, and has promised, that when in England, she shall see her father; poor weak man, taught to believe her rebellious and undutiful, he has obstinately refused lately even to see her. If one day or other the delusion should be withdrawn, what a gulph of misery will be opened before this unfortunate father, perhaps too late; the last groan of his unfortunate child, will be requisite to pierce the veil natural weakness and fraud have thrown over his understanding; but to proceed.

This evening sitting tete-a-tete with Mr. Morley at piquet, who was in high spirits at the idea that I should soon personally tell his dear niece that in six

weeks he will be with her, a billet was delivered me, containing these lines.

“My fortitude forsakes me; ah, Charlotte what shall I do? the dreadful words, the price of a father’s blessing, yet reverberate on my ear, they have struck to my heart, “Four days after we arrive in England you must marry Lord Ormeston.” This is the work of that cruel brother, of the Malcomb that adores Miss Marsden. Tell me, instruct me what to do, may the dawn behold lifeless the wretched Juliana.”

My perturbation, Delia, was not to be conceived; a stranger myself to every art and deception, I could scarce believe it possible the Viscount could have been so base; I begged Mr. Morley to give me his opinion how we ought to act.

My dear Charlotte, said he, no man has I believe a nicer sense of female honour than I have, and particularly where filial duty is required. This case I cannot consider as one where the father acted entirely from his own principles; he is unacquainted with Lord Ormeston’s real character, and in resisting under these circumstances, Lady Juliana only represses an undue exertion of brotherly authority.

But

But the most delicate point to be discussed is, how to avoid marrying this man, for though she never could be compelled to repeat the vow which is to decide her fate, yet advantage might be taken of some moment which may probably occur from the hurry or deprivation of her senses.

An elopement in such a case is allowable, but you, my dear Charlotte, must be the companion of her flight; take my servant, you may trust him, and chuse some opportunity upon the road, but let it be after you are safe in England, as if once stopped and placed in a convent by money and intrigues you may be detained during pleasure. I see your delicacy recoils at the mention of an elopement, I detest it as much as you can do, but here many reasons render it necessary, and you will render it excusable. Elopements though common from their frequency, and sanctioned by the example and plaudits of the fashionable world, are yet considered by men in general in their true light, namely a deviation from all delicacy and decorum, in those cases I mean, where a favoured lover is allowed to accompany the lady, or a young beautiful girl flying alone from father, brothers

thers and friends who ought to protect her and promote her happiness, naturally becomes an object of inquiry; she cannot relate particulars to every one, and therefore must sink under the oppression of censure and unknown dangers if she has not some discreet friend to advise and accompany her. I need not detain you, my dear Miss Marsden, by observing, that if Lady Juliana adopts this method of proceeding, that it will be necessary to keep Mr. Campbell in a total ignorance both of her design and the place of her retreat; nor must she see him till either her father relents, or some change favourable to them both takes place.

I thanked your uncle for his advice, but told him he must give directions to his servant, for I should be so much flurried that I was sure it would be requisite for him to manage all.

I then wrote to Juliana, saying that I had arranged every thing, and meant to set off with them next day, Eventful morrow! be propitious and help to save the lovely Juliana.

I am very low; how soon, my dear Anna, may I like her, though from a different cause, become an object of compassion? Excuse the weakness of
your

your friend, but I cannot help thinking Mr. Osborn is in pursuit of a delusive shadow.

But for me all would have been well; yet I murmur, while the dear woman who is the greatest sufferer never reproaches me as the cause of her misfortune, but eagerly wishes to see, to soothe, and to console me; she knows I partake all her anxiety, nor can a dread shake her maternal bosom and leave mine undisturbed.

Sir George Edgecomb is undesignedly the cause of this dejection of mine, by telling us that Mr. Osborn's impatience would not suffer him to wait for a vessel, none being just then ready, but that he travels over land perhaps with but little escort. Gracious heaven! what is there not to fear from the winds, the sands and the merciless rangers of the deserts? Heaven protect him, that alone has power. Forgive, my Anna, the intrusion of my sorrows upon your happiness, but my days are marked with sorrow; may your's be ever the reverse, and every joy attend you.

C. MARSDEN.

P. S. I shall write from Dover.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

MISS MARSDEN TO LADY HARCOURT.

Dover.

AFTER a quick voyage, I once more hail my friends upon the English shore. Our society, my dear Anna, was not very lively; Juliana, who agrees to all I have proposed respecting her escape, is as well as myself a prey to tormenting doubts and fears, we have desired a few days to rest ourselves here, which is granted, and I hope some opportunity will offer to put our project in execution. Lord Malcomb is gone, and has not seen his daughter, it was a fresh affliction, but I believe has added weight to her resolution.

I have just gone through a spirited scene. I had quitted my pen to seek Juliana; I found her in the dining room, in tears, Lord Ormeston seated by her, soothing and persuading, and the Viscount traversing the room in a violent rage; the moment he saw me,
he

he moved towards me, then stopped, and seemed uncertain how to begin; Lord Ormeston saved him the trouble, he began a long harrangue of his passion for Lady Juliana, and concluded with expatiating upon her cruelty, and my prejudices against him, which alone, he said had more weight with her than the intreaties of her family. He artfully acknowledged the past profligacy of his life, but assured me such an angel as that, pointing to Lady Juliana, possessed sufficient power to complete the work of reformation. He was always famed, my dear, for being a complete adept in dissimulation; had I not known this trait in his character, I might have been induced to believe his solemn protestations. I told him he was mistaken, if he thought I had ever endeavoured to influence Lady Juliana's inclinations; that she possessed too much good sense to need an adviser, but that I presumed to say, I thought to a man of his honour and delicacy, the knowledge of a prior attachment would have been sufficient to preclude even a wish of success. I fear a little contempt was thrown in as I spoke, for the two men looked at me—but fortunately looks do not kill any more than

words. Lord Ormeston was silenced, and only continued to plead with his eloquent, and almost irresistible eyes: not so the furious Viscount, passion got the better of policy, and he reproached me with the greatest asperity; charged me with want of decorum and conduct, with inspiring his sister with improper and romantic ideas of love, sentimental friendship, &c. In short my dear, he absolutely scolded me, and concluded his elegant oration with an apostrophe on the happiness of his fate, in preventing a union with such a woman as myself.

I bore all this patiently, in consideration of his being Lady Juliana's brother; I intreated Lord Ormeston to take his friend away till reason should, in some measure reassume her seat, but he could not quit the dear arbitress of his destiny without a look, a word in his favour, I therefore walked to the window. The Viscount more inflamed at my coolness, continued his insults, and at length deprived me of patience, though not of my temper. I rang the bell, addressing myself at the same time to Lady Juliana, telling her, that if we continued our journey together it must be instantly, and with me alone, for I
was

was not either obliged or disposed to put up tamely with the indignities her brother was pleased to load me with, nor was it longer entertaining to listen to his agreeable lectures. A servant entering, I ordered a post chaise and four. The Viscount, quite off his guard, cried out, not without my permission.

This roused every passion of my soul. Who shall dare, cried I, to contradict my orders? fail at your peril. The servant was your uncle's, and I knew was neither to be bribed nor intimidated, therefore in spite of the blustering of the Viscount I at least should have got off in triumph, had not a more powerful motive detained me. Could I leave our friend in such heart-rending distress? She exclaimed faintly, if you forsake me, every hope is gone; and she dropped senseless from her seat: successive faintings followed, and the fears of the two terrified guilty wretches, who imagined them the harbingers of death, are not to be described: happy perhaps had it been for her, if in these moments her harrassed soul had taken its eternal flight.

No sooner was she by the help of medical assistance, a little recovered, than her brother's passion seemed to revive.

He

He threatened unless she promised to become the wife of Lord Ormeston, to tear her, pale and trembling as she then was, from my arms, and convey her to Malcomb-Castle, where confinement and reflection should be hers.

What temptations does not this display of his character hold up to charm the woman he pretends to love; pretends I may justly say, for a heart callous to humanity must ever be a stranger to its refinements. A spark of humanity kindled however in the breast of Lord Ormeston, and he forcibly pushed the wretch out of the room. Juliana was some hours before she was sensible of what had passed, and is now very ill; I have weighed this important matter deliberately, and am quite at a loss how to act. I cannot forsake her, and yet I fear Mrs. Osborn will be no security, against the brutality of her brother. He may there every hour renew his persecutions; advise me, my dear Lady Harcourt, how to act, your ideas are quick; suggest some immediate plan for us to follow. I shall send this express, and beg an answer in the same manner.

Lord Ormeston has just sent for me, he begs to see me, and promises his
friend

friend will not appear; though their words are not to be relied upon, I shall go down to endeavour to mitigate matters.

IN CONTINUATION.

WHILE the carrier is getting ready, I will sketch to you the conversation between Lord Ormeston and myself. He was alone, but I could not help looking round the room as I entered. "Be not apprehensive, dear madam, that my friend, without permission or hope of pardon, will dare intrude into your presence; he is miserable, madam, at the recollection of his past violence; he curses his unhappy warmth of temper, and declares he will put an end to his existence if you do not forgive him; you must impute it all to his dread of losing you. — [I interrupted him] — "Stop, Lord Ormeston, I can no longer suffer you to vindicate a man reason, humanity and every principle
" of

“ of honor and delicacy must teach
“ me ever to despise. Regard, conti-
“ nued I, but for a moment, his un-
“ fortunate sister, then tell me if con-
“ sistently with reason, I can harbour
“ even a friendly sentiment for a man
“ totally divested of every virtue
“ that can give dignity to mortality?
“ much less, Lord Ormeston, is there
“ room to suppose I can imbibe sen-
“ timents sufficiently powerful in his
“ favour to induce me to place my
“ future dependence for happiness in
“ his hands.”

He interrupted me in his turn.
“ How severe, Miss Marsden, you will
“ drive my friend to despair; - con-
“ sent, my dear madam, but to try
“ the strength of his attachment, or-
“ dain him years of probation; he will
“ submit to any conditions however
“ hard, and the glory of having sub-
“ dued and changed such a disposi-
“ tion, will be reserved for you alone.”

“ I am not so ambitious of obtain-
“ ing so much honour as your Lord-
“ ship may imagine (returned I with
“ some asperity); but to end at once
“ a vain attempt, my affections are
“ irrevocably engaged to a man of
“ real honour and probity, whose sen-
“ timents

" timents I esteem, and whose character I revere, as much as you condemn and despise that of the Viscount."

I remained quite silent, and so did his Lordship for a few moments, at length, recovering his native ease, and seeming totally to forget his very dear friend and his cause, he entreated me to plead for him to Juliana. I declined it, from the conviction that she never, if Lady Ormeston, could be happy, nor make him so. I then recapitulated the particulars of her former engagement with Campbell, begun with the mutual approbation of her friends, and the state it now stood in. I then appealed in the most forcible manner I was able to his Lordship's feelings, and urged him generously to put an end to her present sufferings, by withdrawing his pretensions; but alas, my dear Anna, I appealed to a quality, among many others, which he does not possess.

He heard me with affected surprise and pity, then heaving a deep sigh, I wish, my dear madam, I had known this sooner, many evils might have been prevented; at present I have gone too far to recede, for in confidence,
Miss

Miss Marsden, I have bound myself to forfeit a large sum, more indeed than my estate can afford to lose, if I first decline the match; but time may do great things if aided by your intercessions, and I conceive fresh hopes from the exalted manner in which Lady Juliana has acted, respecting Mr. Campbell; that if I can prevail with her family to exercise less rigour, that she may one day be induced to reward my faithful attachment, and thereby fulfil the wishes of her father; I shook my head.

My Lord, it is a poor subterfuge indeed you are reduced to, when you make a merit of restoring this unfortunate lady to the affections of her family; when it is yourself that has alienated them from her; she never disguised her dislike to your address, and a man of honour and spirit would instantly have abandoned so unworthy a pursuit. He pleaded love, necessity, and the hopes her family had constantly fed him with; upbraided the Viscount, as the ultimate cause of all, and promised, if possible, to disengage her and himself. We parted good friends.

I re-

I repeated every word that had passed to Juliana; she builds much upon his promise, I do not, for I think it a very unstable foundation. My letter is called for, so I can only say, think of our situation; we are afraid to move without advice. Adieu.

C. MARSDEN.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

LORD MALCOMB TO — MEREDITH, ESQ.

TO horse, man, and take the road to Dover; the two doves are fairly caught, and ere long I trust will be as fairly mated.

We shall have some trouble with my little Charlotte; you cannot think what a pretty termagant she is when any thing thwarts her inclination; she inspires Juliana, and adds to her native obstinacy, but once separated, my sister will soon accede to any terms her family may propose: her spirit of resistance is entirely broken.

But some difficulties occur in my way, which thou must help to remove by thy speedy presence and advice. I am devilishly afraid of the Harcourts,
he.

he has power, spirit, and his wife is the bosom friend of Charlotte; staying in England may be dangerous, and therefore I believe she must revisit the continent. Now I recollect you had better stay at Deal, I will come over to you, for being so intimate with Osborn, some evil genius may recollect your ugly phiz, and blow all our schemes into the air. We have had a terrible quarrel, and the haughty charmer is scarce yet out of the clouds; a little submission and flattery though has done much; I am only afraid Ormeston will betray us into suspicion, he lays it on so thick that I often see the smile of contempt sit enthroned on the incredulous brow of Charlotte; but I waste time in words, whilst I burn with impatience for the moment that will bring the proud girl to my arms.

Yours

MALCOMB.

L E T.

LETTER XXXV.

LADY HARCOURT TO MISS MARSDEN.

HEAVENS, my sweet friends! how I shudder at your present situation! Delia and myself have been in undescribable agitation since your express arrived; another is now getting ready to convey these hasty lines with care and secrecy. Had Lord Harcourt been in town, he would have set out for Dover, but the fidgetting wretch is gone into the country upon business, which will unavoidably detain him two days longer, ere which time I hope my dear friends will be in safety. Our advice is, that as soon as you can in the night with dispatch and caution, you endeavour to leave the inn, and take the London road together as far as Rochester; there you had best separate; you are so nearly of a size, that no particular description will be of any use to guide your pursuers, for pursued you undoubtedly will be. Your man can alone mislead them, he must therefore go with Juliana, and by cross roads I hope she will reach
Mrs.

Mrs. Osborn's in safety; advise her to take the way most unfrequented, no matter how much round about.

You, my dear Charlotte, must appear the fugitive fair, and I hope you will get safe to London ere they overtake you, if not it will be only bearing another effusion of passion from the amiable Viscount; I perfectly rave at him. I sent instantly upon reading yours in search of Lord Frederic, but they have taken care to get him to go with his father, to Malcomb-Castle. Some villainy, depend upon it, is on foot, at any rate, to hide the retreat of Juliana.

If you escape you must of necessity stay some time in town, as they will most likely seek for her near you.

Yours,

A. H!

L E T.

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

I Can now, my dear Delia, send you the satisfactory account of our escape, as I question if Juliana is yet arrived, being so very ill indeed when we parted at Rochester, that had she not had some one with her I must have risked the pursuit, rather than have let her set out alone; but before I begin, let me thank you in her name, for the kind consideration that induced you to leave town, in order to meet her, it was worthy of yourself; but I forget you are impatient for my history. The evening of that day on which I had dispatched my express to you, we received a polite message from Lord Ormeston, begging permission to wait on us.

He came, and considerately enough, forbore saying any thing upon the subject of the morning; he intreated me to see his friend, to tell him myself that there was no probability of my sentiments ever changing; he will doubtless like me, continued the artful Ormeston, with

with a sigh, acquiesce in hopeless despair.

Hoping by compliance to rid myself of importunities I detested, I suffered him to lead me to the drawing-room; the Viscount was leaning in a melancholy posture upon a table; when he saw me, he started up in an attitude of extreme surprise, and catching my hand before I was aware of him, kissed it with the most extravagant expressions of pleasure. I disengaged myself from his hold, and assuming a gravity suitable to my purpose, represented to him the extreme folly of his behaviour, in harbouring the least thought that I ever would or could be his; he appeared more hurt than I could have supposed, and clapping his hand to his head, said, you will not forgive me, then pity instead of condemning my frenzy, my distraction, when in the fear of losing you, I dared to upbraid and insult you. Ah, Miss Marsden, benevolence used to wear your form, and this condescension emboldens me to hope for pardon at least.

I was not prepared for such mildness from Lord Malcomb, I expected fury and passion, but found submission and intreaty, this altered my behaviour; I
assured

assured him I freely forgave the recent affront, and acknowledged in becoming terms the honour meant in an offered alliance with so noble a family, but that I had no other than my former reasons to adduce for declining it.

That is, madam, said he, colouring, you would repeat, that you hate and despise me, whilst all your love and esteem center in another object.

I answered, not. Your silence confirms it, and I am wretched. His voice faltered, and he turned away. I am not naturally callous, my dear Delia, distress of any kind affects me, and here I was the dupe completely of his well feigned despair; I felt for him. The event will shew how much my compassion was misplaced.

I told him, his future behaviour might not only purchase my esteem, but give him a claim to my friendship; affections of a tenderer nature were beyond my power to give, but whenever he behaved like a brother to Lady Juliana, the cause of my disesteem would subsist no longer.

He considered a moment, then taking my hand, he bowed respectfully upon it—time, my dear miss Marsden, can alone reconcile me to the loss of this
inva-

invaluable treasure, but be assured, that in future I will be all that you can wish; as a proof of the change your virtues have wrought, let me intreat you to reconcile me to my sister; your pardon will be insufficient without hers; never will I persecute her more, and she may depend upon my good offices with my father. Pleasure for the first time in his company, dilated my bosom, I looked upon Lord Ormeston's persuasions as conducive to this happy change, and scarce staying to express my delight at the commission intrusted to me, flew up stairs to Juliana; it was a pleasing surprise to her. Ah, said she, Charlotte, may no invidious designs lurk beneath my brother's smiles, and I shall be the happiest of human creatures; but let me see him, let me receive his proffered reconciliation. I rung the bell for the gentlemen, they instantly obeyed the summons, and the Viscount gracefully saluted his sister, and most affectionately intreated her forgiveness. Ah, Delia, how beautiful she looked at this moment, her eyes shone with pleasure, the drops of sensibility bedewed her cheeks, her whole form seemed reanimated; I fancy Lord Ormeston found her more seducing than ever.

ever. We passed a most agreeable evening notwithstanding I could not help noticing some very significant glances which passed between the gentlemen, and awakened my pénétration. They retired early, on Juliana's account; she embraced me before we went to rest. At length, Charlotte, I have room to hope, surely a brother cannot dissemble thus far. The next morning we met at breakfast, and the Viscount proposed to his sister her going to their seat in Kent, to await the return of their father from Malcomb Castle, and added he, tendering a letter, I have wrote to Frederic to give us the meeting, and hope my sister will still be favoured with Miss Marsden's company. I bowed, Juliana agreed to what he advanced, but added, as we mean to travel slowly why cannot Frederic meet us on the road? you distrust my care then, interrupted he hastily, but I have deserved; I will alter my letter and tell him to come hither, we will wait for his arrival: this day passed like the former one, very pleasantly. After tea I received your hasty billet and withdrew to read it: James followed me to my apartment, and told me he had learnt in drinking with some Flemish Sailors, that Lord

Ormeſton had agreed with the captain of a paquet bound for Oſtend, to pay his whole freight for a friend of his and his wife, then at Dover. He told the captain, the lady was rather refractory, and diſliked going, but he hoped they ſhould get her on board the next day. James enquired if they knew the lady; they told him ſhe was very fair, rather ſhort, and but lately returned with her huſband and his ſiſter, who was ill, from Montpellier. Heavens, Delia, what a wretch! I charged James to be ſecret, and get a coach and four ready by one o'clock; and ordered him, as ſoon as the Viſcount's ſervants were gone to bed, to ſend off my other ſervant to prepare a carriage at the next ſtage, and to hold himſelf in readineſs as ſoon as the gentlemen were retired: I then returned to the drawing-room.

It has ever been difficult to me to wear a face of ſmiles when my heart is oppreſſed with terror; gueſs then how hard the task to reſreſs its feelings now when loaded with terror and reſentment. After ſupper, I pleaded a headach as an excuſe for retiring early; the Viſcount appeared alarmed, propoſed advice, and feared my attendance upon his ſiſter, and the agitations I had experienced

on

on her account, had been too much for me; begged I would the next day take an airing. Lord Ormeston remarked, that a carriage might bring on a return of my headach; the sea is sometimes very efficacious, continued he, and we can procure a commodious boat for the ladies and take them to dine on board Guildford's ship, she is at anchor about a league from the port. I pretended to close with this proposal on condition of not being disturbed early; they then suffered us to depart for the night, that they might, I suppose, finish their plan and conceal their joy at its apparent success.

Certainly in imagination they fancied us already on board, and sailing towards their wished for port, but the event proved that women, as they are generally allowed, are quick in contrivance and bold in execution, for my little plot was thought of and executed with greater facility than theirs, which had been so long in embryo. The terror and disappointment of Juliana were excessive when I communicated the discovery, which again disappointed her hopes of domestic happiness, she agreed that we must be gone, but was unable to think or speak concerning

cerning it : we sat looking at each other for two hours, the pictures of trembling expectation ; at half past one James knocked at the door, her emotion increased and my heart beat quick ; he put out our candles, and lit us down stairs with a lanthorn ; we went in profound silence, for we had to pass both their chambers. As my maid was getting into the coach, a carriage with four horses drove into the yard, and a gentleman jumped out and ran in ; James kept hurrying the drivers, and at last we went off ; but we had scarce got clear of the town, before I plainly heard the sound of a carriage. We are pursued, exclaimed Juliana, by the light of the moon I see a chaise ; she threw her arms round me and trembled violently. In ten minutes we were overtaken, and several voices cried out to the driver to stop. The men not knowing the reasons we had to decline, in spite of James swearing, obeyed. I screamed, and bid them go on and mind no one else ; but I was disregarded, and a servant opened the door of our carriage, and believe me, Delia, I wished for either the Viscount or Lord Ormeston to preserve us from insult. When I saw a stranger leap in, I would have called for James ; he guessed my

my design, and putting out his head, told the post boys to drive on with the utmost expedition, and he would pay them well; this increased my terror, with which when he had sufficiently diverted himself, he burst into a fit of laughter, and taking both my hands, how enviable is the lot of Lord Harcourt in raising such emotions in the placid bosom of Miss Marsden! What a thoughtless creature to terrify us thus, but we were happy at any rate to find it such a friend; nay I verily believe, at least he says so, that I threw myself into his arms for joy. How kind it was, Delia, the moment he heard of our distress, to fly to our relief. We did not stop half an hour upon the road, and upon his arrival at Dover, his servant happened to know James who accompanied Lady Harcourt to England, and acquainting his master, his Lordship concluding it must be us, jumped again into his chaise, and the postillions who had experienced his liberality soon brought him up to the objects of his pursuit. Juliana could scarce recover her fright, and I could not get over the idea of being pursued; we found a carriage ready at every stage, and at Rochester separated; Lord Harcourt took

me aside and begged me to let my maid accompany Juliana, and as he knew the cross roads to be very bad and in some places dangerous, he would if I was not afraid to travel alone escort her to Sanfon Vale. At that moment I never reflected upon my own journey alone, and when I did recollect it, was too great a heroine to seem afraid. I embraced Juliana, and saw Lord Harcourt lift her into the chaise, for she was unable to stand; I then jumped into mine, and we drove off our respective roads, I stopped at Sittingbourn to take some refreshment and rest, of which I stood in much need. In about ten minutes James came into the room, Lord Ormeston, madam, is this moment alighted; will you see him? Certainly, was my answer; and in the same moment Lord Ormeston entered the room. He stared at the sight of me, Miss Marsden! I thought to have found Lady Juliana. It may be a narrow minded principle, but I smiled, Delia, and enjoyed his disappointment. Lady Juliana, my Lord, is gone another way. He was very guarded, no impatience, no petulance escaped him, not a word of the sea visit; we sat down, and he partook of my coffee. After some time
I ven-

I ventured to enquire where the Viscount was. He smiled, on the road, madam, to meet more mortifications but less disappointment than I have done. You, madam, are the object of his pursuit, as his sister was of mine; I will not ask you where she is, the question would be ungenerous, but will you kindly satisfy me in one particular? Is the gentleman who overtook you at Dover, and who no doubt came expressly to assist you, either Mr. Campbell or Sir George Edgecomb? I assured him on my honour neither. He appeared much gratified, but I could not help indulging a propensity to laughter when I heard the reason which detained the Viscount so much after his friend; you must know, my dear, in the confusion the people at the inn did not exactly see how we arranged ourselves in two chaises, so they told him upon enquiry, that three women went in the one towards London and a gentleman took another road. Certain of catching us very soon, the Viscount sent Lord Ormeston on with their chaise, and waited himself till horses could be put to the coach we had quitted at Rochester, as he thought that would best accommodate us all to Boxley, where he hoped to induce us to go.

In about half an hour, his lordship arrived; his assumed serenity had vanished, and he displayed his usual violence; I suppose had his love been acceptable, I might look upon these bursts of rage as so many proofs of it, and especially when I tell you he never mentioned his sister but once, his whole theme being the little confidence I had in him, and the marked contempt our secret departure had evinced.

Ask yourself, my Lord, whether I had not cause to want confidence in the man who smiled most when he meant to betray? What were your designs at Dover, my lord? did they deserve my thanks? for shame; but I forget you are lost to every sense of feeling.

He kneeled, he swore eternal obedience to every future wish of mine, confessed the plan of carrying me into any other country no matter which, provided it was under arbitrary government; but now he would forswear all such thoughts. You may indeed, returned I, most provokingly; it will, I trust, ere long, be totally out of your power ever to put them in execution. You will be another's? exclaimed he in a voice which terrified me; but the man who pretends to Miss Marsden must first demand
my

my permission. This bravado irritated me. Your permission, my Lord? no, he would justly scorn my hand if he owed it to your bounty. The chaise was now announced, and I left him raving and storming, but not presuming to detain me. I felt as happy as a poor bird escaped from its prison when out of his hearing; but at every stage my persecution was renewed, for they travelled at the same rate that I did, but all my adventures were not at an end, it was just dusk as we parted at Dartford, I hoped for the last time, and my chaise having ten minutes advantage of theirs, I was stopped by two highwaymen. I had really of late been so inured to frights and alarms, that I was going quietly to comply with their demand of my money, when the report of a pistol close to the chaise terrified me so much, that my pocket-book, which I was striving to disentangle from my purse, fell out of my hand, and I fainted in the bottom of the carriage; on recovering my senses, I found myself supported by the Viscount, who in the tenderest language possible endeavoured to calm my apprehensions. Finding all danger past, he at length succeeded in some degree. James it

seems, had fired the pistol which occasioned my fright and the precipitate flight of the robber. My purse had fallen within the carriage, but I have unfortunately lost my pocket-book; I say unfortunately, as my picture was in it, which I meant to have sent to your brother. I shall have it advertised, as it is by no means a pleasant circumstance the having one's portrait in the hands of strangers: but to return to my fellow traveller, he was all respect and mild attention. How this man can vary, Delia! he is a Proteus, and assumes any shape at will; in fine, he attended me to Lady Harcourt's, for I was really not brave enough to finish the journey without him. I was told her ladyship was alone, therefore without previous ceremony I ran up stairs; but you can alone imagine her ladyship's surprise at beholding my attendant; her unaltered friendship manifested itself in her reception, but she seemed puzzled how to accost the Viscount; he too felt an intruder, and in justice to him I explained the riddle, which procured him a smile: he very soon took his leave.

Anna desires her love, and begs
when you have done with her good
Lord,

Lord, you will send him back to us; I hope he will bring us the agreeable intelligence that Juliana is better, and in some degree happy. Tell Mrs. Osborn I shall grow quite ill-natured if I am detained from her much longer; it is provoking to be torn from a solitude I admire, and forced into a round of dissipation which I detest. The Leyburns I hear are in town, I shall send a card to-day; Harriet is in Shropshire, upon a visit, and Charles is with his regiment, in the Isle of Wight; our intercourse will consequently be ceremonious; I fear I shall have some trouble with the Viscount, he is continually calling or sending, upon some pretence or other, still quite in the submissive strain; what amazes me, he takes no notice respecting his sister. I dread some concealed vengeance, and if ever the absence of your brother caused me pleasure, it is at this juncture. I should tremble every hour for his safety, with so violent a wretch as Malcomb to deal with.

I cannot flatter myself his ardent pursuit arises wholly from love, it is rather from revengeful spleen and disappointed pride; a new object, or a new pursuit will probably vanish his
attach-

attachment, and deliver me from persecution. Adieu, my dear Delia, with every kind assurance to your mother, and Juliana. Believe me

Your affectionate

C. MARSDEN.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

LADY HARCOURT TO MISS OSBORN.

SO, Delia, you have heard all this grand piece of fufs; never sure was its equal. Elop- ing here, flying there, plots, counter- plots, highwaymen, fainting, soothing. Heavens preserve us! yet these are the grave ladies. Poor I, with all my volatility, never had any such rout about me, and my blundering Lord, no doubt, thought it a wonderful good joke to pop his wife head into the coach in the dark, and frighten the poor girls; I shall scold him well.

But

But seriously Charlotte is finely hampered with the Viscount. After the feat of chivalry he performed in succouring the distressed damsel, the least she can do is to behave civil to him, nor can I shut my doors against him, as he has never personally offended me, without giving umbrage to his family; a cruel task that imposed upon the great world, of being obliged to see and receive those whom you secretly despise with the same outward politeness as those you really esteem.

Lord Ormeston has also made his bow, and silyly endeavoured to penetrate the secret of Juliana's retreat. By the bye, Delia, I begin to be jealous (nor shall I be so quiet the second time) when do you mean to send back Lord Harcourt? you forget that I am so unfashionable a wife, as to take pleasure in the company of my husband, although upon such an occasion as this I can better reconcile myself to the idea of separation.

To-night we go to the Danbys: you know their balls are so elegant, that it would be highly unfashionable not to be there; but I am disappointed, I had set my heart upon dancing with your flame, Sir Harry Dorset, and he is this morning

morning set off for Bath, but Charlotte has a great choice of beaux, and I believe I must borrow one. She is quite cross at being rallied about them, and declares she will not dance at all if the Viscount offers his hand. She calls me; by her voice she is much pleased. Hang the provoking chit, I hate to be disturbed.

CONTINUATION.

I HAD nearly made a fine conclusion, Delia; a narrow escape of breaking my poor neck, for no sooner had I got to the top of the stairs, than looking down, I saw Lord Harcourt at the bottom; seized with the surprise I laughed, screamed and cried all in a breath, and flew down so quick that I really thought I had made but one step; and would you believe it, the creature had the ill-nature to chide my impatience, and preached me a long sermon upon the dangers of precipitation, and the risk I had incurred. I made up a grave face, put my

my hands before me, and curtsied assent: but smiles and good humour soon resumed their usual abode, and I had the heartfelt satisfaction of hearing, that your fair incognita is safe and well. My dear Ned speaks in terms almost of adoration of your charming mother; by the bye, he is very cunning: you understand me, Delia.

I offered to decline my engagement of to-night, as became a dutiful wife, but my caro sposo loves pleasure better than a domestic tete-a-tete, and setting fatigue and his deary's kind offer both on one side, is gone to dress with all possible celerity, in order to escort us; but it is ten o'clock, I cannot scribble any longer, but must conclude to-morrow.

CONTINUATION.

YOU always loved descriptions, Delia; I am by far too impatient to give good ones, but as you are ever ready to excuse the deficiency of your friend, I proceed.

Dress is a topic I hate to discant upon, you know our usual stile, and therefore may imagine us adorned and already at Mrs. Danby's, I made Lord Harcourt engage Charlotte before we set out, and thus secured her from the claws of the Viscount; to be entirely rid of him was impossible; he declined dancing, as he could not have that honour with the dear object of his affection, and continued the whole evening fluttering around her, and barring all access to others. His particular assiduity was remarked by the whole room, and poor Charlotte was almost in tears with vexation, nor was I quite at ease, for I easily perceived Lord Harcourt with difficulty preserved his temper; I danced two dances with a new created Lord, whose character and person are both truly original. Imagine to yourself, Delia, a short fat man, nearly forty, with a countenance denoting

noting his frequent libations at the shrine of Bacchus, his head ornamented in the fullest style of fashion, his whole person decorated in the most sumptuous manner; add to all this, a most awkward and conceited gait, with constrained and affected manners, perpetually aping men of fashion, and fatiguing himself to appear at his ease: when you have figured all this to yourself, you will have the portrait of Lord Newland. He succeeded his father it seems in a lucrative branch of trade, which continued about ten years, and having realized an immense fortune, retired from the Borough to the purlicus of St. James's. The old fashioned useful furniture of his forefathers was sold, more modern substituted in the place; the whisky gave place to a vis-a-vis, and his sideboard groaned beneath its massy load, yet still something was wanting to give a gusto to his enjoyments; plain Mr. sounded too much of the plebian in his ears; by virtue of interest, and his immense property, he obtained the completion and ultimate end of all his wishes—— a title.

He now sat off for Paris, where by virtue of recommendation and the politeness

liteness strangers of any rank ever receive in that centre of fashion, he got into the first circles at the court of France, and after having I suppose afforded them the highest diversion, and acquired a few fashionable coats and phrases, he returned to his native country, after an absence of six months. His title procures him easy admittance to the company he is ambitious of keeping, though it cannot blunt the edge of satire. He has purchased a fine estate in Wiltshire, and passes there for a man of taste and gallantry; as a proof of it, it was my happy lot to be selected by him last night from all the gay beauties present; he paid me unbounded attention, and took care to inform me of his large purchase, adding, that the house was generally allowed to be spacious and elegant, but upon my soul, Lady Harcourt, to a man that has a taste for architecture, and who has been allowed in the first circles to be a connoisseur, it appears barbarously gothic; I shall therefore absolutely level it, my Lady, and raise a new pile upon the ruins, from a plan of my own. I was at length quite fatigued with his nonsense, for though his conceit and ignorance diverted

verted for the moment, it could not be suffered long.

The entertainment was in the usual manner, splendid, and the company in general select and charming; Charlotte very late in the evening had the unexpected pleasure of seeing her little lively friend Harriet Leyburn; she introduced her to me, and she has promised to see us often. She came to town early last night; I cannot help being a little satirical, but I think if the Leyburn family, instead of the father, son, and Harriet, had but Lord Newland at their head, they would be as complete a compound of ignorance, pride, and insolence, as can be found in the whole world. We left the Danbys at four; I was handed to the carriage by my new conquest, and turning my head to seek for Charlotte, beheld her literally surrounded, Lord Harcourt on one side looking very glum, the Viscount on the other, with a pitiful dying countenance, Lord Ormeston, who is his shadow, close at his elbow, and Charlotte herself the picture of chagrin and despondence, at the door of her carriage; she lost two of her attendants, and I gave loose for a moment to my natural playful disposition,

position, but I desisted the moment I found it gave her real pain; she declared she would leave London, she could not exist.

Lord Harcourt opposed this resolution; his argument was a just one, and had proper weight. He alledged that from the proofs she had already experienced of the Viscount's intentions, she had reason to suppose he would omit no feasible occasion of getting her in his power, that he would consequently pursue her wherever she retired to, and therefore in point of situation he thought none more eligible than the house of a friend, whose inclination and power should be exerted to the utmost to promote her happiness and safety; tolerably gallant, you will allow, Delia, considering the man's wife was present; but she being a mighty tame domestic animal, not only approved, but applauded his offers. Charlotte, to oblige us, externally put off her chagrin, and we reached home in perfect harmony with each other.

I have this moment received a most ludicrous note from Lord Newland, containing his homage, adoration, and an invitation to dinner. I have left Lord Harcourt and Charlotte amusing themselves

themselves with the style and orthography, whilst I conclude my letter to you, and believe me ever to be,

Yours, &c. &c.

A. HARCOURT.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

MR. OSBORN TO MISS MARSDEN.

A T length, my dear Charlotte, I am permitted to address you from the sultry shores of Indostan; I seize the moment, though almost the same I have landed in, to assure you by the packet now under sailing orders, of my health, and unceasing regard; I will not pain your susceptible bosom, by an account of the dangers and fatigues I experienced in crossing deserts at so unfortunate a season, that my escape is almost a miracle; but the idea of being detained six weeks longer, to wait for a ship, was far more disagreeable to my thoughts
than

than the hazard of the land journey. My attempt has been successful, and gives me every hope from so auspicious a beginning. To-morrow I shall deliver the recommendations Lord Harcourt's friendship has furnished me with, and proceed afterwards to investigate the business which has occasioned my voyage.

Shall I own to you, my dear, I am almost a coward? but consider, in excuse of my weakness, that the happiness of my future life, (may I without vanity say *ours*) hangs upon the uncertain issue of a moment; it is in the power of one man to pronounce our fate; my uncle's head clerk is the person I allude to, he lived with him twenty years, and if he was ever married to Clara, he must be acquainted with all the circumstances; nay, she principally rests her claim, I am told, on papers now in his custody. Think how much I have at stake; indeed nothing but the assurance of your esteem could prevent my sinking into foolish dependence.

How often, my dear Charlotte, have I been in imagination with you at Sanson-Vale; how often delineated to myself the sweet placid smile of Miss Marsden,

Marfden, and the tear of affection trembling on the cheek of my beloved mother; inventive fancy has made me present at all your amusements, and many hours have I passed with you in the temple of the wood!

These chimeras of the brain may be justly treated as folly, but it is of that pleasing nature not easily to be renounced. May the period soon arrive, when these ideal scenes shall be turned into charming reality. I shall write a few lines to the best of parents. Assure my dear Delia of my unceasing fraternal love; she too is happy in your society. I am tempted to be envious, and cannot help wishing myself any object, honoured by your personal notice; assure me very soon that I still occupy unrivalled the esteem you once so generously avowed, but do not imagine I doubt it, no; if I had reason, the same moment I think would deprive me of existence. I would only wish you to repeat words which afford me such secret, such unspeakable satisfaction. You know the feelings, the sentiments that govern my heart, and stimulate my actions, and be assured that I not only look upon Miss Marfden as a woman formed

ed to be fondly loved, but as a friend whose counsel I can rely on, and in whose conversation I shall ever find pleasure and delight.

This my dear Charlotte, is the only basis upon which lasting happiness in the matrimonial state can be founded. A marriage to gratify the passions cannot afford permanent felicity. The eye is often caught by the external glare of beauty, but how soon does it wish to wander, if a mind is not found correspondent to the form. I do not wish to be thought severe on the sex, my dear Charlotte, but certainly they in general lavish too much pains upon the external graces necessary to attract our attention, and neglect totally the internal ones, alone capable of fixing it theirs for ever.

You may readily imagine, I think you an exception, by the freedom with which I deliver my sentiments upon what I term the most striking error of the beautiful part of the creation. I assure you without flattery, it was the exalted opinion I had of your understanding that so long deterred me from acknowledging the power it had obtained over me, added to the fear of offering a heart I thought unworthy so much merit. Your con-
descending

descending acceptance has raised me in my own opinion, and near you would make me the happiest of men.

May no envious power interfere and dash from my view the pleasing prospect which rises before me!

By the next vessel you may expect some interesting particulars; till then, that health and felicity may be resident at the Vale, is the sincere wish of

Your devoted

H. OSBORN.

LETTER. XXXIX.

SIR GEORGE EDGECOMB TO LORD
HARCOURT.

Montpellier

MY dear, Ned, I am in a truly embarrassed situation. The avowed purpose you know of my journey hither was to serve Campbell, but he too defeated my intention.

VOL. I.

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intention

intention, and rewarded my friendship by a distrust and want of confidence. Nothing but the distraction of his ideas can induce me to pardon. In short, yesterday morning at breakfast time he was missed from the Marquis de Re-sevilles, to the great surprise of us all. He left a billet, intreating my pardon, and begging me to excuse him to the family, adding, he had received some intelligence of the Malcomb family, which had reduced him to the verge of distraction.

The only apology I could make for the Marquis was, a disclosure of some part of the cause which influenced his departure; it was admitted, and I pursued him hither, but he had so many hours advantage, that I could not overtake him. Rash man, he is rushing to his probable destruction, for I apprehend the most tragical consequences will ensue from his meeting the Viscount. I shall return immediately to England, and hope to find my esteem for the parties has magnified the danger.

I am most flattered by the earnest desire you tell me Lady Harcourt and her charming friends express to know
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196 JULIANA ORMESTON : OR,
therefore only detain him whilst I
subscribe myself

Yours truly,

G. EDGECOMB.

P. S. Write to me at Poynes's, Dover.

LETTER XL.

LADY HARCOURT TO SIR GEORGE
EDGECOMB.

MON AMI,

LORD Harcourt having
slightly hurt his wrist, in
yesterday mounting his horse, has done
me the honour of deputing me his
secretary, therefore Sir Knight Anna
was obliged to see even the line mark-
ed off for her *non-inspection*. How
can you ever dare presume to see my
face again? for I will publish it to
all fashionable female circles, and
take

take up the cudgels in defence of the satirized sex.

But you have quite mistaken the matter, my friend; the thought of shewing an elopement would induce three parts out of four of the women in Christendom to do as much for each other, as Charlotte has done for Juliana; though I do not think their romance was very complete neither. Campbell and his friend Sir George Edgecomb would have sounded much better among the *dramatis personæ*, than either a brother, a rejected lover, or a meddling married man.

But I forgot both that you meant some intelligence of your fugitive, and that I was actually employed to send you some.

About three hours previous to the receipt of your letter, to the astonishment of us all, he was announced; I was very glad to see the poor innamorato, but Charlotte her pretty mouth at the precipitate demand of where was Lady Juliana; he I thought excused his disobedience very handsomely, and assayed again to obtain information of his Lady Dulcinea, but this was peremptorily refused by the inexorable Charlotte. You know, Sir

George, I am naturally compassionate, and I never wished so much to give a friendly hint as at that moment. Poor Campbell looked so woe begone and disappointed, but a look from your friend Ned, and the beginning of a long remonstrance from Charlotte, effectually deterred me.

He enquired carelessly after the Viscount, and finding Lady Juliana actually safe, he seems perfectly calm and far from having any intention towards renewing old animosity: I advised him to leave town.

No, Lady Harcourt, replied he, with great energy, I have complied with the wishes of my friends to the utmost extent of propriety; if I continue so pointedly to avoid Malcomb, it will appear particular in the eyes of the world, and call my honour most certainly in question, but this I will promise with all my heart, that I never will begin any conversation before him that may possibly advert to a subject on which we must ever differ. I dread notwithstanding, Sir George, that if any officious person, and it is pretty generally known, relates to him all she suffered at Dover, that he will resent it to the utmost; indeed something

thing of the kind he has certainly heard, which occasioned his abrupt departure from Montpellier, and though I shall hourly tremble for his life, I should call him a fool and a coward if he did not resent the wrongs of his beloved Juliana.

We hope soon to have you here, I should have insisted upon your making our house yours during your stay in town, but Lord Harcourt assures me you have before denied him not liking family restrictions; the request must therefore be waved, and I can only hope that you will give us as much of your company as possible. With extreme impatience I expect the promised narrative, any thing that concerns so respected a friend must be interesting to

A. HARCOURT.

L E T.

LETTER XLI.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

AH, Delia, after a short and deceitful calm, prepare the amiable and unfortunate Juliana, to exert her utmost fortitude. I am yet so much under the dominion of terror, that I can scarce collect spirits enough to give you the horrid account; but I wish to be beforehand with the public prints; but I must first premise, that the place of her retreat remains unknown, and therefore she has nothing to apprehend.

We went last night to the opera, attended by Lord Harcourt, Sir George Edgecomb, and Mr. Campbell. They would not stay in Lady Harcourt's box, but went into the pit, to a party of gentlemen they knew. In a few minutes I saw the Viscount and another gentleman approach them; Lady Harcourt said, she had seen him with Mr. Osborn, his name is Meredith; she observed to me the malicious glances the Viscount cast towards our party;

party; but I cannot describe the rage and fury which blazed throughout the countenance and deportment of Campbell, when upon turning his head, he saw the Viscount; not knowing the subject he had been listening to, I upbraided him in my own breast, as an inconsiderate madman, unmindful of his promise, and forgetful of the peace of Juliana; but at that unfortunate moment, he had just heard from Lord G—— a circumstantial account, and of every thing that could tend to influence his resentment, and which we had carefully suppressed. The immediate appearance of the object of his rage, fully accounts for, and indeed in some measure, justifies his behaviour. The performance was interrupted, and a general scene of confusion ensued; their friends got them into the lobby as soon as possible, and Lord Harcourt ran up, to beg we would go home. As we passed to the carriage, we saw a great crowd, and heard some very high words, Lady Harcourt begged her husband to return, and endeavour to make up matters; and half dead with fear, we reached home. Till one o'clock we sat tormenting each other with every horrible idea frightened fancy could.

could suggest, nor were they all groundless. Lord Harcourt returned about that time, and his countenance was so strongly marked with distress, that we dared not ask what had happened, but sat silent. After an awful pause of a few seconds, he gave us the following account.

After I left you, my dear Anna, I returned, and persuaded the gentlemen to adjourn their dispute to some coffee-house, and not expose themselves and other parties concerned before all the world. My advice was listened to, and we all went to the Cocoa-tree; five minutes reflection, as we went, brought Campbell to sufficient recollection, and he listened very reasonably to our friendly endeavours of mediating between them. The Viscount was silent, and I concluded, that having upon a former occasion proved our friend's superiority in the field, he did not care to face him again; but I had no suspicion of the black design he was forming.

Lord Ormeston attempted to palliate, said the dispute now arose with Mr. Campbell, they had no knowledge of his being in England, consequently did not come to the Opera-House to seek him;

him; he thought some apology necessary to his friend, and purposed his withdrawing with him into another room, and made no doubt but our proceedings would be characteristic of men of honour. The Viscount took him by the arm, bowed heartily to us, and they quitted the room. Much altercation ensued after their departure; Campbell was certainly to blame, but yet had cause. It was resolved to attempt the arduous task of reconciling them by fully investigating the original source of dispute, and endeavouring to shame the Viscount into at least an acknowledgement of his error. I sat down to write a note, requesting the two gentlemen that had left us would meet to breakfast in the same place next morning. Whilst writing, a waiter told Mr. Campbell a servant wanted him. Sir George was averse to his going, but our friend, superior to every suspicion, left the room. About ten minutes afterwards we were alarmed by a great noise in an adjoining room, and hastening thither, found the door locked, and found there was fighting within. My apprehensions of foul play roused every passion human nature can display in such a situation,

situation, I burst open the door without aid, and found the Viscount just fallen to the ground, and Lord Ormeston, who was not armed, endeavouring to wrest Campbell's sword from him. Enraged, I collared his Lordship; the company interposed, and we found these two *noblemen* had contrived to send for our friend, hoping no doubt, to have dispatched him between them; as for the Viscount, he has his deserts, and will not be able to do any more mischief for some months, if ever.

Had Lord Ormeston's sword been drawn, they would certainly have been both indicted for an intent to murder, but as it is, the law would conceive it that he was endeavouring to prevent mischief.

In fine, my dear Anna, this unlucky business is now become so known, that I fear Juliana's reputation will receive a mortal stab through its means. I heard from a gentleman present, that she was thought to be with her father, but the contrary will now be known, as he is arrived this evening in town, the sight of his son in the condition to which his depraved heart and vicious principles have a second time reduced him, will doubtless much affect

affect his weak senses and debilitated frame.

This was Lord Harcourt's narrative; our trouble was not much reduced by it. In short, Juliana's situation is now so critical, that in my opinion all advice would be officiously impertinent, her feelings I believe are fine, and she possesses a good heart. Indeed I have sometimes discovered gleams of a noble and enthusiastic soul, but indolence and want of resolution stifle these emanations of sentiment, known only to the heroic and susceptible breasts. I now think it beyond probability that Campbell and her, ever can be united; I wish the endeavours of his friends to persuade him to make the tour of Europe may be attended with success. Absence can alone restore their lost peace, and stop the breath of slander, which would enviously blast the fame of our friend, with propagating if near each other, the report that she encouraged, perhaps the murderer of her brother.

Adieu, Delia, may no scenes of equal discord, disturb our domestic harmony. What must be the sensations of
these

these they immediately affect, when we can so poignantly feel for them.

C. MARSDEN.

L E T T E R XLII.

MISS OSBORN TO MISS MARSDEN.

MY beloved Juliana has, if it were not before excited, drawn forth the utmost stretch of my compassion. Ill-fated woman! to what is she reserved, Heaven only knows, nor what will be the result of her intended journey. To an all beneficent and merciful providence we must resign her, for she is fully bent upon leaving us, nor will hear of my accompanying her; she assures me she shall be safe with you. May her confidence meet every confirmation her most sanguine hopes can form. Ah, Charlotte. what are the advantages of birth and fortune? what signifies the dignity of rank, and the superiority of a name, when held in competition with that in-

rate

nate calm and happy tranquility attending on a life of retirement? Yet think not I am grown a misanthrope, and mean to exclude social intercourse and cheerful friendship, no, I would fly from the gay world, to enjoy them in higher perfection; no form nor tedious introduction, but hearts beating responsive with the impulses of nature, pure and undorned with the hated veil of art or dissimulation. The costly jewels, and gorgeous robe often, my dear friend, serve as the disguise of a heart pierced with many wounds; too often in the features of the gay, the lovely, and the fashionable leaders of the day have I traced the indubitable mark of recent chagrin; the laugh affected to smother the half stifled sigh, and the smile of pleasure scarce obliterating the rising frown of disgust. The woman of fashion is eternally obliged to be a dissembler, or lose in an instant that influence which attracts like the magnet all who approach; she saunters through a perpetual round of dissipation, surrounded by the approving crowd, and overwhelmed with a deluge of flattery, which by being continually repeated, becomes not only habitual but even necessary to the very existence of her good

good humour; she returns to her home wearied and overcome with lassitude. Perhaps at the hour of rest, thoughts intrude which preclude all ideas of possessing it, and she rises to go through the same troublesome routine as the day before. This was the situation two years ago of Lady Juliana Malcomb, young, lively, totally inexperienced, deprived of the maternal love that would have repelled her too eager pursuit of pleasure, she was introduced into the world with every advantage to render her admired. Happy was the man who could boast she had deigned to smile at his wit, or notice the homage he offered; endued with a great share of her family pride (before misfortunes taught her to correct it) she was continually offended by the fashionable part of her own sex; who thought her too young to be their leader. The men thought otherwise, and no balls so elegant, or assemblies so brilliant as Lord Malcomb's; the lovely Juliana was the theme of every tongue, and the goddess at whose shrine all their incense of adulation was offered; yet she was not happy. The round of diversions palled, and many an hour of chagrin has she passed in confidence with me: our different educa-

tions

tions, and I will add, expectations, taught our thoughts to flow in a different channel, and rendered these moments of solitude pleasant to me, which to her were insupportable. At length the merit of Mr. Campbell made its way to her heart through all the barriers of pride and pleasure. From that hour reason began to dawn anew, and she regarded the pageantry, the empty gratifications that surrounded her in a true point of view; she grew more affable, mild, and unassuming. The hopes of the crowd that surrounded her, crushed by her avowed preference, she was no longer persecuted by the flattery of the one sex, or pained by the jealousy of the other. Feeling sensibility and conviction of her former follies seemed at once to have renewed their authority over her bosom, and have since served to wound her the more acutely. She is just at this instant at the most critical period of her life, and her present conduct must stamp her future character in the eyes of the world, as you justly observe. Ah, Charlotte, my beloved sister, I will call you by that endearing name; for you are undoubtedly so in the eyes of heaven. How happy are we in the future prospect of
a calm,

a calm, a peaceful life, uninterrupted by the sudden whirl of prosperity or adversity. Blest with the smiles of those we love, and an easy mediocrity, we shall set the world at defiance, I mean the trifling part of it, and shew the reasonable few that we can dare follow their examples, however they may derogate from the fashion and prevalent example. I hear Juliana, she enquires for me; I will endeavour to hush her sorrows into a momentary calm; to time and your friendship I leave the rest. Adieu, my esteemed friend.

Yours,

DELIA OSBORN.

L E T.

LETTER XLIII.

LADY JULIANA MALCOMB TO MISS
MARSDEN.

I Must write, I must give vent to my feelings, before I dare encounter the eye of friendship, which will in vain endeavour to penetrate with foreboding anxiety, the designs of the wretched; I would if possible fly you too, generous Charlotte, I would avoid bringing before you a creature born to wound all; unfortunate enough to have any knowledge of her, but that will be impossible, I cannot be a miser of my griefs, or be in private a victim. Come to me then, amiable Miss Marsden, teach me to reconcile myself to what I am about to do, and wear at least to the world the exterior form of quiet; exterior indeed it will be, for every wound of my heart will renew its anguish with the dawn of the morning; and I shall exclaim when I again view the hated return of another day, Why am I doomed to live and recollect the past? Write to my Delia, she will call me unkind, I have
deceived

deceived her, she believes my intention was to remain with you, but every impulse of natural affection, duty and regard to my own character forbids my longer secluding myself; into the hands of an enraged father I am determined to resign my future fate; happy, thrice happy, if in the first moment of rage and frenzy, he puts a final period to that being who, since she has known the world has known only misery. Let me have the sanction of your presence, however, my dear Charlotte. I know you will do your feelings a violence by so doing, but perhaps it may be the last bequest I may have the power to make. I shall remain at Richmond till I hear your determination; I have, if you comply with this request, an additional favour to ask, which is, never to mention to me the name of Campbell, it will be in vain; and for the last time I now indulge myself with the remembrance of it; dear beloved name! which once I fondly, enthusiastically thought I never could bear to hear mentioned but with reverence, Ah, how changed! yet surely in appearance only; the heart must be still uniformly the same, noble, benign, and good. Where, where must the blame rest? Hold,

Hold, Juliana, nor drive further into the veil thou must never penetrate ; the die is cast, Campbell is nought to thee, he is the assassin of thy brother, and they have cruelly made thee their victim. Yes, my Charlotte, it is so indeed, I cannot erase him from my memory ; not even time itself can obliterate his beloved image, but reason, resolution, and a wish to remove the unfortunate dissensions of my family, will enable me to act conformable to their wishes, and separate her from all his presumptuous hopes. In one word, my dear Charlotte, you alone I will see, I except even Lady Harcourt, and will never consent to be introduced by you to our mutual friends, but as the wife of Lord Ormeston. Yes, strange and indelicate as it may appear, it is now my turn to sue. Through him alone I can hope for a father's blessing, for the restoration of lost fame, and surely that is worth trying for——the wife of Lord Ormeston !——I sickened at the repetition, the pen fell from my fingers, and a momentary suspension of my faculties ensued. Ah, I have much to learn ; when that period arrives, will he accept this lifeless trembling hand, without love, esteem, or any one prejudice
in

in his favour. He has said it, and to the world I must appear as his happy bride, not a shadow of disgust must remain at his approach, but a face decked with borrowed smiles. Hateful disguise, detested artifice, when my heart will weep tears of blood, at beholding a man to whose ill-timed partiality it owes all its long account of misery. Ah, my friends, insanity at this instant would be a blessing. Fly to me, my amiable Charlotte, let me behold you, and have the voice of comfort once more.

The truly wretched,

J. MALCOMB.

L E T.

L E T T E R XLIV.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

THE enclosed will explain to you the determination of our friend, it is worthy of her, and the struggles she undergoes to fulfil it, are indeed meritorious ; I will in order as they occurred relate to you every particular. I was not long in obeying her summons, she terrified me by her appearance, pale and faint was her countenance, and with difficulty she rose to receive me ; the disorder of her mind was but too visible, both in person and dress. We talked of indifferent subjects for some time, at last averting her head, will you be still my friend ? uttered she in a tremulous voice. I answered by embracing her. You are kind, continued she, I need such a support as yourself, for I am a poor weak creature ; she sighed, then turning with a smile to me, it is now over, said the amiable lady, and I will be myself. She rung and ordered a chaise : now, my Charlotte, aid me, for this dreaded meeting, how shall I encounter the frowns of my father
or

or the rage of my brother ? I can oppose nothing but tears and submission, but all shall be completed, this is my first essay, and she took the ribbon from her neck with the picture of poor Campbell affixed to it ; keep this, continued she, holding it to me with a trembling hand ; quick ! hide it, lest I reclaim it ; never let him have the pain of knowing I have parted with the first gift of love, unless he intrudes an unwelcome visitor to the repose of Lady Ormeston ; be then, Miss Marsden, our common friend, and by letting him know the extent of my fortitude and my real sense of rectitude, inspire him with proper respect for my reputation, and reverence for the sorrows he has helped to augment. Ah, Delia, how noble was this effort, I adore her for it. We were not long reaching London. As we drew near Lord Malcomb's, I observed every nerve of our dear Juliana in agitation, and in vain assayed to compose her, her eyes wandered every way, as if in search of an expected object, at length she fixed them on Lord Ormeston, who was coming out of the door. She shrieked out, which directed my attention that way. He heard, and at the same moment, saw her. Judge of his surprize, he drew
back

back twice ere he took courage to accost us ; alarm was still but too visible on her countenance. Must I ever, said he, lowering his fine eyes as he spoke, inspire the woman I adore with fear and disgust ? She had not the power to reply, but gave him willingly her hand to alight from the chaise, and indeed his arm was necessary for her to reach the hall. Here, said she, with a low broken voice, must I stop, nor unpermitted rush into Lord Malcomb's sight ; to you, my Lord, I apply for assistance, I wished to see you, will you accord me the favour of pleading in my behalf ? He was gone in an instant ; I believe he loves her as much and more than he ever did before. His return was not very soon ; the moment she saw him she sprung forwards with her hands clasped, tell me, she exclaimed, have I a father ? *You have*, answered he. Without waiting for any thing more, she ran past us to the library, from whence she just then heard her father's voice, and falling at his feet fainted. The Earl was really moved, he raised her most affectionately in his arms, and life soon reanimated her frame. The first words she uttered were Pardon ! pardon ! Her interesting form will never be obliterated from my mind ; sunk again upon her knees, her beautiful

hair fallen down during her disorder, her uplifted hands, and that expressive energy of countenance we so often admired, rendered her at that moment the most beautiful creature I ever beheld. Lord Malcomb recovering a little from the first impulse of natural affection, assumed a stern air, Juliana, said he, you know the only terms on which I can or ought to grant it. She looked at Lord Ormeston, and I saw her shudder; but in an instant recollecting all her courage, my father, she answered, in a steady voice, I have ever revered, loved and obeyed you, except in one instance, even that was once sanctioned by you, it is so no longer; and I cannot, I am now convinced, persist in it compatible with my duty to you; one must submit to reunite our once happy family, that task be mine, I am all obedience, and you shall dispose of me at your pleasure. She had now exhausted all her strength, nor was the arms of her father with-held from her support; his pride satisfied by this unexpected concession, all the parent reassumed its place, and he became instantly solicitous about her. Lord Ormeston was all love and gratitude, nor was your Charlotte forgot in the general amnesty.

Lord

Lord Malcomb, so far from upbraiding, whatever he thought, dignified me with the flattering title, of the preserver of his daughter. Lord Ormeston called me his better angel, and for the moment, forgot my hand was not Juliana's; I could not help hinting the Dover scheme; he actually blushed, the sense of shame was not quite lost in his breast, and he begged me to forget it. While pleasure thus seemed to have descended among us, accompanied by blue-eyed peace, the door suddenly bounced open, and the Viscount was led in; the moment his eyes fixed upon us, he seemed as if a basilisk had struck him, and recoiled back. Lord Malcomb told him he hoped he was come to welcome his sister home; the wretch stared and seemed to watch the looks of Lord Ormeston to understand what we were about; his Lordship took the hand of Juliana, and presenting it to her brother, this, my Lord, said he, is the pledge of our friendship. The ungracious Viscount then embraced her, and hoped they should have no more elopements, or bloodshed in the family. Tears were the answer to this satire, and Lord Malcomb interfered in her behalf. I never loved him before,

he seems much better, and the Viscount is pronounced out of danger. Lord Malcomb and his daughter begged me much to stay till a certain ceremony is over, which is to be hurried over as soon as possible, to stop the idle tales daily circulated. I declined their intreaties, as I do not chuse to be in the house where the Viscount has so much power, but I have promised to see her every day and take all the fatigue of preparation from off her hands. Immediately after the first compliments paid and returned, they are to go to Ormeston-House, whither I have been obliged to say I will accompany them. Lady Harcourt grumbles horridly, and insists upon it, she will not consent to be confined by fair means, unless I return to keep up her spirits in that dangerous situation; she snatches my pen, she will write; yes, I will, dangerous situation! What an ominous sentence, to strike my vein, yet how can I help myself; I heartily wish I could, but it is literally impossible. Charlotte, with a face as wise as my lady Dowager Simper, cries, Anna, you are very wrong, how you fly about. Anna, you will really catch cold. Then comes my fidgetting Edward, Anna, do not go to

to the ball to-night, you must not dance, and the carriage may get in the crowd and terrify you. I then very gravely fetch a treatise on the weather for Charlotte, and a receipt book for cordials and possets for my Lord. They call me strange creature, and the next moment, begin again to teaze me; but seriously, my dear Delia, I am much grieved for poor Lady Juliana; she at last decided her destiny, and I fear the measure of her misfortunes will be completed the day that makes her Lady Ormeston, and yet I do not think, delicately circumstanced as she is, that she could do otherwise. Charlotte is a true friend, ever ready to assist and participate in distress, and not like the generality of the world, be cool when misfortunes or grief oppress the object they pretend to esteem. She is constantly at Lord Malcomb's, and to-morrow evening, the ceremony is privately to be performed; my Lord and myself are invited; I tremble for her, and think her feelings must be too poignant for description. Lord Malcomb recovers hourly; but I hope notwithstanding he may return with safety, that Campbell will have more consideration than to revisit the capital

just yet; Lord Harcourt has persuaded Sir George Edgecomb to write, and beg of him not, and likewise to break to him the intended nuptials, lest casually hearing of them might impel him to some extravagance. What a rout this love makes, does it not, Delia? By the bye have you found a young Lord within these two days, strayed into your woods or shrubberies? I shrewdly suspect he has mistaken the direct road to Malcomb-Castle, from which he was to bring some writings, &c. and wandered to a certain pretty little abode, not a hundred miles from Harcourt-Castle. Guilty or not guilty of his detention, Delia? I insist upon a categorical answer, without preface or evasion, for if some account is not had of him before long, I shall advise the advertizing of him, as he is a hopeful young man, and then you must confess, or be brought to trial for stealing. Adieu, Charlotte will write after to-morrow.

Yours,

L. HARCOURT.

L E T-

L E T T E R XLV.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

A H, Delia, it is over! that day so dreaded, and our friend is the wife of Lord Ormeston. Yesterday morning I promised to be with her early, but was not soon enough for her impatience, as she sent twice during the short time I was dressing; I found her very much agitated, and indeed had great difficulty the whole day to keep her from fainting; her father made her a visit in the morning, and really seems glad that the restraint is taken off, which forbade him to acknowledge his affection for her, but even his greatest expressions of fondness are tinged with that excessive hauteur the family were always remarked for, and the visible decay of his understanding; she was indulged with remaining all day in her dressing-room, and we only saw Lord Ormeston for about five minutes before dinner; after dinner her agitations augmented every moment. Lord and Lady Harcourt and myself were the only per-

sons, not of the family, present; I was truly glad of their arrival, as the charming spirits of our Anna were never more necessary then at that time, to contribute to the support of us both. Lady Juliana exerted herself before her, and seemed for the first time that day to wear a smile; but, ah! how soon it vanished at the approach of Lord Ormeston with the dreaded summons; a cold dew overspread her face and she was just sinking; recollection came to her aid, and she attempted to shake off her despondency; it was an attempt, for though she faintly smiled on Lord Ormeston, yet I plainly perceived that her limbs trembled so much, that he rather carried than led her to the drawing room. The Viscount was there, supported on a sofa; she went and embraced him. Oh, Delia, how the two wretches seemed to exult over their victim! I whispered Lord Malcomb to hasten the ceremony, for indeed I feared she could not go through it; I was agreeably disappointed, for she pronounced every word very articulate and distinct, she even bore the congratulations all present offered her, and took some tea apparently very composed; but it was a deceitful, temporary

rary calm, and lasted not long; she was speaking to me as I sat next her, and Lord Ormeston was leaning on our chairs, when I perceived her voice falter, by degrees she was unconscious, and at length she dropped, devoid of sense into my arms. You may imagine the consternation all were seized with, for we actually thought her dead. Medical assistance was immediately called, and in about an hour she gave signs of returning life. Our company, you may imagine, was easily dispensed with by the family. I left her as soon as I perceived her rather composed, she prest my hand, see me soon again, my Charlotte, cried she, in a low weak voice, I have exerted myself too much this day, and I dare not reflect, added she, looking upon her finger; I dare not trust myself to reflect what I am, but fear me not, beloved friend, I will struggle to act right though my poor afflicted heart burst in the contest. I embraced her, I did not speak, for I could not trust my voice, but hurried from her to the drawing-room; Lord Ormeston met me; may Miss Marsden, said he very gallantly, be soon induced to follow the example her sister's excellence has this day shewn her; but,

my charming friend, you are in tears; Heavens, my Juliana!—is better, my Lord, excuse this little weakness; indeed I have derogated from her exemplary conduct, and deserve reproof for dishonouring our bridal day with tears. He bowed upon my hand with grace, all his own, you know, Delia. When this man pleases, he can do every thing inimitably, even so. He presented me a most superb pair of bracelets in the name of Lady Ormeston, and assured me, that he should not have presumed to offer them had not her indisposition prevented her that pleasure. I could have wished to decline so valuable a present, but did not wish to offend him, especially as one bracelet contained Lady Ormeston's picture, the other has his cypher blended with hers, and both set with brilliants, and finished in an elegant style. My acceptance seemed to afford him much pleasure. I am just hastening to dine there; she begged me to support her with my presence, and Lady Harcourt's, as some of my Lord's relations are to be introduced this evening. Adieu; the carriage waits.

IN CONTINUATION.

WHAT a model of perfection is Juliana; she has had a severe shock this day. Campbell wrote to her, not knowing she was no longer at liberty to listen; it was directed in an unknown character, and delivered to her in the drawing-room before us all; she retired to a window, and the instant she opened it I saw her colour change; she called me, and holding out the letter, whispered from Campbell. My presence of mind forsook me, I knew not what to do. Lord Ormeston perceived our mutual confusion, and advanced. What has alarmed you ladies? The asperity with which he uttered this sentence roused Juliana's courage, fear nothing, my Lord, said she; I have been cheated into opening this letter, and it occasioned a momentary shock, you need not be told who it comes from, but the pain of reading will be spared us both; do me the favour to order a pen and ink. He did not know how to behave, but willing I suppose to try her, brought it himself, she took the pen; ah, how he watched every motion;

motion; but I cannot describe his rapture when she wrote, though with a trembling hand, upon the outside of the letter, "there is no longer such a person as Juliana Malcomb." She then presented the letter to me; to you I deliver it, Miss Marsden, and intreat you will return it to the presumptuous writer. The Viscount said, has Campbell dared to insult us all by writing to you, Juliana? was his kind speech. Lord Ormeston frowned, if you regard me, my Lord, not another word on that subject, your sister is an angel! and he gracefully kissed her hand. How well did she acquit herself through the day; his relations are charmed with her; to Lady Harcourt I leave an account of them, she will do them justice. I hope the accounts we have so repeatedly heard of Lord Ormeston's vices and bad disposition, have been exaggerated, for it is utterly impossible to seem more amiable than he at present does. Next Sunday Lady Ormeston will be presented; my Lord's aunt, Lady Mary Morgan, accompanies her, and Lady Harcourt insists upon presenting me the same day; I have not much inclination for the parade, but she is a dear positive creature

ture, and will have her way; all the rest of our friends join in the persuasion, and I believe I must comply. Lady Mary and Anna take all the preparation upon themselves; here she comes in a violent hurry she will conclude.

[LADY HARCOURT WRITES.]

TAKE it as a great proof of my regard, Delia, that I do vouchsafe to conclude, for I am literally fatigued to death with mantua-makers, milliners, jewellers, &c. &c. these idle creatures, will not give themselves the least trouble, but sit and smile at our bustle; Charlotte too has promised that I shall describe the new relations; unmerciful girl, what have I done to deserve such a task; I shall be very concise however. The first that swam into the room, was an antiquated virgin of about sixty, Lady Jane Lumley, my Lord's aunt, but by her pretty lip, affected giggle, and airyness of dress, I should not have pronounced her more than sixteen, she overwhelmed her new relation with trivial compliments, upon her person and dress, and was not over well pleased, that they
were

were not returned. I have often been chid for placing such characters in the most ludicrous light, and I own in the present instance I could not forbear but threw in two or three judicious compliments; in an instant the whole body was in motion, the head was gently waved, the scraggy neck drawn up as if in wires, and a general display of affected graces took place. Edward gave me an arch look, which nearly discomposed my gravity, however I soon reassumed my steady countenance, and gained the whole and sole attention of Lady Jane, who intreated me to visit her in terms unanswerable but by compliance. Her sister, Lady Priscilla, is the next deserving notice. She seems a woman incapable of the trouble of thinking for herself, perpetually overwhelmed with lassitude, and ennui; if she converses with you, the sentence is generally left you to finish, and then with a yawn, she exclaims, your ladyship is perfectly right, you express my sentiments, but really I almost always forget what I am going to utter, my memory is insupportably treacherous. She has two tall awkward girls, who attempt to catch the airs of every woman they meet dignified with

a title; vain empty ideas, I was choaked with spleen and half dead with disgust at such a ridiculous display of ostentation and affected imitation; not a gesture was natural, nor an action easy, and I very much doubt whether these two girls, though perhaps possessed of understandings capable, if properly cultivated, of rendering them ornaments to the world, possess one single idea beyond the colour of a gown, or the placing of a patch; if dress or fashion were the topic, they have a distinguished share in the converse, but call another subject, and except by the coquettish flutter of their fans, you would not recognize them from the statues that ornamented the rooms; they were too trifling, even to extort a laugh. Think me not too severe, my Delia, or my portraits too highly coloured. I have no compassion for women, when they have attained years of discretion, and whose reason if they ever have any must suggest, they are making themselves subjects for ridicule, they deserve the little mortifications they meet with; but to behold two young creatures like those I have just mentioned, entering into life, into all the seductive pleasures of the world,

with-

without a proper education to fortify them, and render them capable of enjoying rational pleasures; women of sentiment and sensibility they are disgusted at, because they have not been taught to understand what it means; they hear a tale of woe without sorrow, of benevolence without pleasure, and partake of the gaieties of the great world, devoid of enjoyment or the least satisfaction; I, however harsh or degrading it may sound, regard the two in question with an eye of pity. I was honoured with their whole attention; their new relation was too grave, and Charlotte was not dignified enough to attract notice. Happy girl, to be born without a title prefixed to thy name, yet possessed both of virtues and accomplishments sufficient, if not veiled by timid reserve, to dazzle and totally eclipse a whole circle of these right honourable triflers. But Lord Ormeston's relations are not all of this description; Lady Mary Morgan, youngest sister of the ladies just mentioned, is an exception, both in mind, person, and behaviour. Imagine to yourself a widow about forty, tall, and still very handsome; I need not to add, that when I tell you she is the picture
of

of Lord Ormeston, benevolence and sensibility are displayed in her countenance, and she treated her new relation with the affection and pity she demands; she whispered this to Miss Marsden, I was much displeased with my nephew, said the good lady, for persecuting your lovely friend, but as she has at last condescended to accept his hand, I hope, sincerely hope, he will treat her with respect and reverence; he has been guilty of great errors, but I trust her virtues will affect a permanent reformation. I said a hearty amen, Delia, in my own heart; but I acknowledge I much fear it. Habits so strongly confirmed, whether of vice or virtue, are not so easily eradicated, and I am afraid this seeming change is too sudden, as well as too much alteration at once to be lasting. Lord Harcourt is of the same opinion, but we carefully conceal what we think from Charlotte, as it would damp all the pleasure the hope of Lady Ormeston's happiness continually suggests to her. I must not omit Lady Mary's daughter, Miss Sophia Morgan, a sweet charming angelic girl, about seventeen. A delicate susceptibility of soul is diffused throughout her expressive face, and
the

the effect of proper maternal love and attention is visible in her person and behaviour; her cousins treat her with an affected politeness and studied reserve; the reason is evident, Sophia not only surpasses them in external graces, but she possesses a cultivated mind, stored with knowledge both proper and useful; they do not know how to imitate her, and like all ignorant little minds, envy what they can neither equal or excel. Lady Mary told me this morning her sisters and she were only in outward appearance friends; our dispositions, added she with a smile, are very different, and they never forgave what they call my disgracing their family by uniting myself to a commoner, who never was received by them, though a man possessed of every noble idea, and an exalted soul, that would have done honour to a diadem. After his death, they chose, of their own accord, to solicit intimacy, and a thorough reconciliation; but it lasted not long. I would not hear the memory of the man I adored treated with contumely, nor suffer the dear and only pledge of our love to be contemned, as my Sophia too often was by her cousins, we therefore visit seldom and at a distance,

distance, which I infinitely prefer; they treat me and my daughter as poor weak enthusiasts, people of degenerate low ideas, continually talking in a style people of the beau monde cannot be supposed to understand, and consequently not worthy of notice. I need not, Delia, draw a comparison, the subject does not require it. I proceed to the right honourable Mr. Augustus Lumley, Lord Ormeston's brother. He is like him, both handsome and elegant, and just returned from his travels. He seems to have profited much by them, and I imagine, from Lady Mary's account and my own observation, he must have centered all the family virtues in himself; he is what the man of fashion ought to be, graceful, unaffected, displaying at times a proper dignity, and thinking it no disgrace to acknowledge himself capable of sentiment and feeling.

Lady Mary adores him, and declares there never was such a young man. How attentively did he observe the looks of Lord and Lady Ormeston; the rooted melancholy of the latter, though endeavoured to be concealed, did not escape the eyes of such an observer; he seemed to penetrate her ve-

ry

ry soul, to dive into her thoughts, and as if chagrined at the inward sorrow he found there, his eyes assumed a languor of expression beautifully sympathetic. I have talked so much of him and to him this day, that Edward declares himself quite jealous, and archly tells me he shall change his name, and set off for Harcourt-Castle, by way of retaliation. By the bye, Lord Frederic Malcomb arrived last night, three days later than he ought. We were all assembled. At his entrance he complimented his sister and her Lord, and paid his respects round. Lord Malcomb, who had been very impatient during his protracted absence, hemmed thrice, and stroked down his ruffles; pray, my Lord, (with a most important phiz) have the late violent rains caused any great floods on the northern road? No, my Lord, not much, none of any consequence. (Hem again.) No! I am surprised, I thought by your delay the roads were impassible. I looked up, I suppose with some meaning, for poor Frederic encountering my eyes, coloured instantly like scarlet. I was detained, my Lord, said he, though not by the weather, I met with a friend. This poor excuse seemed to satisfy

satisfy the old peer; and good humour was instantly restored. He soon came round to my chair, and whispered, you have great penetration, Lady Harcourt. How do you know? I replied. Your looks, madam, assure me of it, and to dissimble with you is impossible; your charming friend is well, I left her this morning: but do not betray me. I nodded assent. And thus, Delia, my curiosity is satisfied; and in future I shall honour my own skill in divination. Ah, you fly girl, but I will excuse it, knowing the characters of the family so well. Ned is just come to the door with his new phaeton, I have promised him the honour of my company for an airing, therefore adieu, my dear Delia.

Yours,

A. HARCOURT.

MISS MARSDEN WRITES.

BE not alarmed, my dear Delia, all is happily over, and Lady H. is as well as can be expected, she concluded in high spirits, and mounted with her Lord in the new phaeton as she told you. They drove off, and I began to practise a concerto. In about half an hour, a bustle in the hall a little alarmed me, and I rang to know the cause; no one answered, and it increased. I descended a few stairs, and heard plainly hysteric fits, this quickened my pace, and in the hall I found poor Anna in violent hysterics, and my Lord just brought in senseless.

Assistance was called, and I learnt that a stage coach driving furiously along, had caught one of the phaeton wheels, and overturned it. Lord Harcourt, fearful only for Anna, threw himself so as to break her fall, and received two violent contusions, which deprived him of his senses, he is however in no manner of danger. We conveyed her to bed, and found she had no other hurt than fright, which hastened

tened her so much, that before night she was delivered of a fine boy.

Ill as Lord Harcourt was, he would be supported to her apartment, that she might be convinced he had no material injury. She was overjoyed to see him, and the certainty of his not being so much hurt^d as her fears suggested; operated like a cordial on her weary frame, and she sunk into a composed delightful slumber. The child as well as mother, seems perfectly tranquil, and this dreaded hour is past.

Ah Delia, how I was agitated for her, I feared we should lose our estimable friend, but thank heaven, she is restored to my ardent prayers. I am quite ill from inquietude, and expect Lady Ormeston every moment: I fear her company will not contribute to raise my spirits. Adieu, my dear Delia.

Yours,

C. MARSDEN.

L E T.

LETTER XLVI.

MR. CAMPBELL TO LADY JULIANA
MALCOMB.

[Inclosed by Miss Marsden in the foregoing]

PITY, amiable Juliana, the sorrows of an unhappy man, who has continually the fear of offending you before his eyes. Perhaps at this instant my fortunate rival is pleading before you love authorized by duty; and which blended, your sense of rectitude scarce knows how to resist. Ah, beware, Juliana, forget not that our mutual vows are registered in heaven; and without openly violating those sacred ties, you can never be another's. Another's! how calmly do I write a word which I can scarce think of without distraction. Oh, spare me the dreadful image my fancy has formed; write me but one line, to say you are still faithful, and will still set me an example of fortitude and constancy. What an unfor-

unfortunate being am I, twice have I been compelled in my own defence to raise my too successful arm against the brother of her whom I adore; my sufferings on each occasion were undecribeable, and I have never recollected those rencontres without the most heartfelt anguish. In vain my friends endeavour by dissipation and amusements to remove the melancholy ideas which will continue to overwhelm me, till the object of my eternal affection deigns to tell me she still lives for me. Ah, if on the contrary, actuated by resentment against the miserable Campbell, and stimulated by duty, she should forget his sincere, his humble love, and wed another! — but I will not harbour such an idea, it would render me unworthy the smiles of Juliana, should I imagine for a moment she would derogate from the example she herself has set me. Say then, in one word, you will remember me, and in three days I will set off for the continent, and remain there till some fortunate occurrence may contribute to facilitate our union. By this instance of my obedience to your will may I merit

242 JULIANA ORMESTON: OR,
the continuance of that esteem with
which you have honoured

Your faithful and adoring,

CAMPBELL.

MISS MARSDEN TO MR. CAMPBELL.

[Inclosed with his letter.]

TO say I pity you is a phrase too common to express my feelings, I more than do it; at this moment a tear falls upon my paper for the unfortunate Campbell; but ah, my friend, the lovely Juliana is still more the object of compassion. A victim to her duty, she can no longer afford you even her friendship. Read the line upon the enclosed, and recognize the well-known hand. Unfortunate Campbell!
yet

yet blame her not, she has suffered exquisitely, and they are far from an end; let me entreat you to put in execution your design of quitting the kingdom, if it is only in consideration of her happiness, which can never be permanent while she thinks every meeting of her brother and yourself may be attended with danger. Adieu. Think no more of Juliana, she lives no longer for you.

C. MARSDEN.

LETTER XLVII.

MR. CAMPBELL TO MISS MARSDEN.

PARDON me, amiable Charlotte, if my distraction should render me incapable of following the strict rules of decorum in expressing the feelings of an injured man. This is the first day I have been sensible

sible of my misfortunes, a delirium succeeded the first knowledge of them; why have I recovered to anguish I cannot support! Cruel Juliana, whom I so fondly loved, and still must, it is impossible ever to forget thee, though I am no longer the object of thy esteem; not even the grave shall prevent my adoring thee.

Ah, my charming Miss Marsden, how kindly you sympathize in my distress; what a consolation is such friendship. Ah, had Juliana possessed such feelings! but you tell me she is not happy—Could my life have purchased her felicity, with what pleasure would I have resigned it; but to behold her another's! Hold, my head, nor let my madding brain rest upon the dreadful thought. Tell me not the fiend that has usurped from me the object of my fondest wishes, lest I wildly interrupt his happiness, and demand the restitution of the charmer of my soul; but Juliana, she has struck the blow to my heart, she has forgot how much I adored her, she remembers no longer what I have suffered to express my love, she has rejected me, she despises the honest warmth of my affection; complying with the
interested

interested views of her family, she has embraced misery; and I fear has made Lord Ormeston master of her destiny. Ah, Miss Marsden, if he is indeed the man of her choice, how shall I support it? I will revenge her. If I must lose her, why not deliver her from the power of a wretch, whose sole delight will be to torment her. You advise me to leave England, but I will not. What, leave my adored Juliana in the arms of a man who will perhaps forget the inestimable blessing she has conferred upon him, and treat her—— O God! let me not behold the horrid idea. No, my amiable friend, I will remain a watchful spy over his actions; and the first time he forgets the adoration, the respect due to my angel, he shall feel the effects of my rage.

C. CAMPBELL.

LET-

L E T T E R XLVIII.

MISS MARSDEN TO MISS OSBORN.

I N my two last letters, I acquainted you with the recovery of my amiable Anna, and the distracted state of poor Campbell; I have not dared to communicate it to Lady Ormeston, it would be cruel to disturb the seeming calm which she at present appears to possess. Yesterday the ceremony of our presentation took place, for Juliana would wait for Lady Harcourt. No expence was spared to render our friends appearance splendid and striking; but, ah! what can hide the feelings of a heart torn by a thousand conflicting passions! In spite of the sparkling jewels, and the elegant apparatus that furrounds her, I saw the starting tear, and perceived the half-stifled sigh. We were received at court with that affability which ever distinguishes the British throne. Lady Ormeston attracted universal attention; I never saw her look so lovely. Lord Ormeston was as usual, elegance

gance personified; he was I think the handsomest man at Court. To-morrow we set off for Ormeston-House. Lady Harcourt is quite angry she has now no longer the least pretence for detaining me, I live actuated by ten thousand fears, for should Campbell put his intentions in execution and wait the motions of Lord Ormeston, gracious God! what scenes of misery may ensue! particularly as I think there is already a visible alteration in his manner towards her; it may only originate in my imagination, but I fear she will find it but too soon. Jealous he certainly is in a high degree, but it is not that jealousy which derives its birth from love; it is the production of a mean and narrow mind. Ah, Juliana, victim of fraternal avarice, ere half thy bloom is gone condemned to a life that will probably shorten thy days, how much art thou to be commiserated! Lord Ormeston perpetually suspects something, and though I am convinced of his indifference, yet devoid of the least spark of generosity or consideration, he will before long I am confident shew himself the tyrant. Our party for the country consists of Mr. Lumley and Sophia.

Morgan; her mother is detained at present by business, but will soon join us.

With what compassion does the elegant Augustus regard his lovely sister, from the tenor of his looks, and the melancholy visible in his conduct, I feared he regretted the success of his brother; but I wronged him. Yesterday chance left us together, our conversation was not very lively, it began about Juliana. He told me how much she was to be pitied; and I am sorry to say, confirmed what I had always heard of the profligacy of Lord Ormeston's conduct. He begged me to tell him the real occasion of her marrying him. I did. Ah! said he, with a sigh, I have known too well the misfortunes that attend upon love, not to pity them in others. From the first moments I saw Lady Ormeston, I perceived the inward struggles of her heart; I beheld the restraint she laboured under, and I pitied her from my soul; and you my amiable friend, I fear are not without your inquietudes. I blushed at his penetration. Pardon me, Madam, continued he, I am rude, but believe me, nothing can surpass the respect I have for you; the unfortunate generally sympathize
with

with each other, and I have reason to account myself one of those. This, said he (pulling from his bosom a small picture which he gave me to look at) has supported me these nine years and enabled me to endure life, almost rendered insupportable. It was a face not perfectly handsome, but the most interesting expressive countenance I ever beheld; the original might have been when the portrait was drawn about seventeen. I own my curiosity was excited, and Mr. Ormeston gratified it in these words. My father, the late Lord Ormeston, was when only Lord Lumley, very fond of Paris, and resided often in its neighbourhood for some time together; he thought me too young, and indeed I had but little inclination, to enter the fashionable amusements of that gay city, I therefore spent my time solely at the chateau, which was delightfully situated about four leagues from Paris; my mother, who loved solitude, was generally there as well as myself, and we used to spend our time together to our mutual satisfaction. She was Miss Marsden, the most amiable of women, and I never think of her without a sigh; there was a great number of poor inhabitants round our environs, and when

ill health prevented her visiting their huts, she made me her almoner and the steward of her bounty. I was then about seventeen. I one day went into a cottage more neat than the rest, and the inhabitants of which had never solicited our relief; I saw her elegant simplicity realized. The furniture was neatness itself, and to my surprise I found the inhabitants were English; it was a Lady and her daughter whom I first saw; their manners convinced me of their being people of superior rank, and I was impatient to introduce them to the notice of my mother; we often saw them, and every interview confirmed the first impression the graces of Matilda had made upon me. My mother beheld her with the same eyes that I did, and I am certain soon loved her as her own daughter: they were often at the chateau, and Mrs. Wilson soon perceived the passion I had for her daughter. She said to me one day, amiable young man, you have given me in the friendship of your estimable mother, the greatest comfort I have known for sixteen years, deprive me not then by an ill-placed attachment of this blessing; Matilda Wilson is beneath the family
of

of Ormeston. I protested the purity of my love, but promised to conceal it in future. Matilda had long known it; unaccustomed to deceive or conceal the emotions of my heart, I no sooner adored, than I told her so. The modest dignity with which she always treated me, encreased my respect and admiration of her virtues equal with the love I bore to her person. Things were thus situated when my mother died suddenly. My father, too much devoted to his pleasures, bore her loss very calmly, not so with me; I loved her with the true affection of a son, and I mourned our mutual loss, with Mrs. Wilson and Matilda; she was now the sole point of my wishes; and often had I solicited her to consent to a private marriage, but without effect. One day in particular her words struck, and perfectly overawed my soul; I had employed all the rhetoric of love. Augustus, said she, with a haughtiness I never saw her assume before, I have reason to think my descent would not disgrace yours, but as it is not yet a certainty, seek not to occasion me either self reproaches or those of a family I may be rendered unworthy of after acting in so clandestine a manner.

I swore

I swore never to renew the subject, and perhaps might have been this day happy but for a fatal imprudence which has occasioned me days and nights of unspeakable anguish. My father brought with him in one of his visits to the chateau, a party of gentlemen which prevented me going some days to the cottage; the day they went my father gave a great dinner previous to their journey, and I was obliged by them to drink more than I usually did. Fatal, cursed vice! after their departure, though later than ever I ventured to intrude before, I flew to see my Matilda; it was nearly dark when I arrived, and it being nine o'clock, the inhabitants of this peaceful abode were retired to rest. Elevated beyond my usual ideas, I determined not to be disappointed, but at all events to see Matilda.

In that country you know, Madam, they fear little, and therefore frequently sleep with the doors open; this was not the case here, the door was shut, but the window opened at my touch, and I sprung in without noise. I soon reached the chamber of Matilda; she was already asleep. I put back the curtains, but the instant I beheld her
sleep-

sleeping in all the security of innocence, my heart recoiled at the idea of the imprudence I had committed; I resolved to return, but could not resist imprinting a kiss upon her beautiful hand, which hung carelessly out of the bed. She waked. My God! Augustus! Her voice never offered me before any sensation but that of pleasure, I now scarce dared to listen; she repeated my name with a voice almost inarticulate with fear. I flung myself upon my knees by the bedside, and acknowledged my error, intreating her to be composed; it was some time before she could recover the terror I had occasioned, and she begged me to retire. I saw she was really displeased and overwhelmed with grief at her own anger and my own imprudence; I left her.

After a night of sleepless anxiety, I flew to the cottage; Mrs. Wilson told me Matilda was very ill. This excellent woman forbore to reproach me, when she saw my sorrow for the offence I had committed, but told me the next day I should see Matilda and she would intercede with her to pardon me. I went quietly home, and wrote a letter filled with love and excuse: but ah,
Miss

Miss Marsden, how shall I describe my distraction, when I returned the next day, and found only an old woman in the cottage, who told me the ladies went away the day before, and had left that packet in her care for me. I opened it in emotions not to be described; in it was that dear portrait and a few lines from Matilda, which are too strongly imprinted on my mind for me ever to forget them, they ran thus. "You tell me I cannot possibly love, or I could easily forgive a fault which your passion for me made you commit. Ah, Augustus, how much are you deceived; I not only pardon you the imprudence which has occasioned our separation, but I will likewise afford you the poor satisfaction of knowing that I love, and therefore fly you. Yes, Augustus, Matilda by the enclosed gift does not wish you to forget her; let it sometimes recal to your remembrance her, whose wayward fortune forbids the hopes of ever seeing you more." I stood like a statue, after reading this billet, the portrait alone was my comfort. I have travelled through Europe; I have beheld the most celebrated beauties, but they have not for a moment, erased from my
idea.

idea the remembrance of Matilda. I have sought her in vain, in France and England, and have no longer the hopes of beholding her. Thus he finished his little narrative. I have not shed so many tears but I had yet a few left for the unsuccessful love of Augustus, he declares he shall never marry, unless he finds his regretted Matilda. Ah! Delia, there are many unfortunate, as well as ourselves; let us not then imagine that we alone are born to suffer; but review the sorrows of others, and cease to murmur at our own. Adieu, my dear friend, embrace our mother for me.

C. MARSDEN.

L E T T E R XLIX.

LADY HARCOURT TO MISS MARSDEN.

TWO days after I was deprived of the company of my Charlotte, I received the enclosed packet from Sir George Edgecomb;
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it is the history he has so long promised us, and upon which I shall make no farther comment than, that whether arising from the story itself, or from the sincere regard I bear Sir George as the friend of Lord Harcourt, I cannot tell, but certain it is, that I have not been so much affected a great while. Let Juliana read his heart-rending lines, she will see it is not necessary to look farther than the small circle of our own friends to find distresses similar, perhaps greater than those we experience.

You, my dear Charlotte, early began to feel, from your tender years you have been the child of sympathy and sorrow. May the next packet from India by transporting to his native shore Henry Osborn, quiet every fear of my beloved friend, and restore to her that permanent tranquility she deserves to enjoy. I shall not make my letter longer, I have not spirits to write, my eyes too are painful, they have paid a tribute to the memory of the ill-fated Carolina. Adieu, my Charlotte,

Yours,

A. HARCOURT.

L E T.

LETTER L.

SIR GEORGE EDGECOMB TO LADY
HARCOURT.

MADAM,

HAVING been long flattered that the interest you take in my welfare, has made you desirous of knowing those events from the experience of which I derive that habitual melancholy which at first surpris'd, and I believe I may add, sometimes a little displeas'd you; the enclosed will account for it. You must not expect it coherent, it was wrote at a period when my heart yet bled for its recent loss; and was painfully awake to every recollection of chagrin and disappointment. I will not longer intrude upon your patience, but intreat you to believe I am with every sentiment of respect and esteem your friend and servant,

GEORGE EDGECOMB.

-O H, Caroline! beloved object of my most sacred vows, still does thy fleeting shade pass before my eyes; I strain, in vain, my aching sight to behold thee, I grasp in vain, the phantom with my outstretched arms, it illudes my embrace, it glides from my view; I pursue, but in vain, it dissolves into air, and I remain precluded from the possibility of following the resemblance of her whom I adore. Cruel and unrelenting father, you have not only deprived me of the beloved of my soul, but have denied me the poor, the wretched comfort of weeping upon the earth that covers her, immured in a convent. Drooping like a tender flower deprived of its supporting branches, she declines by degrees her beauteous head, and at last——dies! Ah, Caroline, by me alone art thou lamented, the hours of affliction are lightly passed by the generality of our friends, and no sorrow so soon forgot as that occasioned by death. Far otherwise with me, my widowed arms shall never be extended to receive another love, nor while my senses are spared,
and

and my recollection remains, can my heart forget to vibrate for my Caroline. No sculptured marble rises over thy tomb, no lettered tablet paints thy fair example; for me that task remains, I know and best can paint thy worth. May every fair and virtuous woman who reads the mournful page remember Caroline, and profit by her shining graces, but may she never know her sorrows, nor experience her misfortunes.

Caroline was the daughter of Sir Richard Ratclif, the representative of an ancient catholic family in the north, his only child. Having early been deprived of an excellent wife, he centered all his care in his daughter, who from her infancy promised to be of an excellent disposition. Sir Richard was a colonel in the army, and my father wisely judging that an inactive and idle life is the foundation of every vice in youthful mind, procured me a commission in the same regiment, we were stationed near his estate, and in common with the other officers, I was often invited to his house to dinner, and sometimes saw Miss Ratclif; but those views were too transient to form a lasting impression. Lively by nature

nature, and pleased with the way of life my father had allotted me, I thought not of any attachments of a serious nature; indeed I must acknowledge I had not imbibed the most favourable ideas of the fair sex; I had studied those authors with attention who treat them as agreeable triflers, incapable of pleasing beyond the moment, and equally incapable of practising the virtue they boasted of. I was at length totally convinced of the fallacy of these arguments. Forgive me, lovely and enchanting sex, ye are amply avenged; for Caroline was reserved the glory of demolishing in an instant the maxims I had been years in forming into a system. We had a ball one evening at a neighbouring town, all the families of the country round were invited; Sir Richard being our colonel, his sister presided as Lady of the feast, and it was my good fortune to dance with Caroline. Not one of my companions but envied me; I felt my vanity gratified but nothing more. The next day a particular friend of mine, Major Seymour, came early to my apartment, I was still asleep. What a lazy fellow are you, said he, opening my curtains, to lie dreaming here when

when you should be improving your good fortune. I desired him to explain himself.

Is it possible replied he, that you are such an insensible as not to have perceived the impression you last night made upon the accomplished Caroline? But beware my friend, for I fear you will have many disputants for so fair a prize. I declared to the Major how ignorant, nay even indifferent I was concerning his intelligence; and dressed myself, and went out as usual without thinking any more of what had passed; in compliance with the rules of politeness, I however called in the evening at Sir Richard's, and was received with, I fancied, more joy than usual. I observed Caroline, she coloured as I paid my compliments to her, and I thought the Major's penetration had not deceived him. From that moment I resolved, with a blush I confess it, to afford myself a little diversion from the partiality of Caroline. Yes, sainted angel, from the first moment that the true sense of thy inestimable worth beamed upon my soul, I became truly penitent for the sacrilegious thoughts I had presumed to harbour against thee, but that was not sufficient; years
of

of penitence and sorrow were allotted me to expiate the offence. I went to her father's as often as I consistently could, and always found myself a welcome guest; at last my visits were so customary, that if I staid away three days, Sir Richard would call at my apartment to learn the cause. This intimacy gave me frequent opportunities of insinuating to Caroline that I loved her; she listened to me with complacency. Our discourses were almost short, and generally embarrassed, for looking upon her in the light I did other women, I was frequently at a loss for the conversation I imagined best calculated to please her; but time was hastening to undeceive me. One evening as we were walking in the plantation close to her father's house, after pouring out a rhapsody of nonsense too tedious and too trifling to repeat, I attempted taking a few liberties with her, which I imagined her partiality authorized me to do. Ah, what was my surprize, when disengaging her hand from mine, she darted at me such a look as awed me into immediate respect. Mr. Edgecomb, said she, I am mistaken, I took you for a man of honour, but I find
you

you degraded into the worst of all libertines. Him who under the mask of affection endeavours to insinuate himself into the affections of a woman, who knowing, despises him as he deserves. In uttering these words, she flew from me to the house; nor had I the courage to follow or prevent her; so much influence has one word from a virtuous woman over a man however abandoned his principles may be. I remained stupid, but yet my eyes were not sufficiently opened; I went home and wrote a billet to endeavour to justify my conduct; I assured her, if I had forgot myself for a moment, it was only occasioned by the violence of my love, and concluded with soliciting an interview, to atone in person for my past folly. I shall insert her answer, as it will mark the character of Caroline.

SIR,

THE note you have just done me the honour of writing, is to the full as incomprehensible as the conduct you therein attempt to justify; I cannot help thinking that you rather insinuated in your discourse of yesterday, that I had afforded you some reason for your presumptions. Reflect well, I intreat you, Mr. Edgecomb, before you give way to those suggestions of imagination; the reputation of a woman is too delicate to be trifled with, and I should hope that a man of honour would find other subjects more interesting to employ his thoughts upon, and if he did by chance indulge an idea so verging towards sullyng that purity he can never destroy, I trust it would be but momentary; the sentiment of probity and honour that he professes, would enable him to check others of a different nature, and instead of the asperser of female honour, he would be the zealous champion to vindicate and protect it; but if we find one indeed who full of the dissipation, the follies of youth, suffers the effects of vanity and self-conceit to draw a veil before his eyes, impenetrable

to

to any other views than those consonant to their suggestions, enters the house of a respectable, a worthy man, insinuates himself into the friendship of his family, and wanting some object to feed his vanity and gratify his pride, casts his eyes upon a young and unsuspecting female for that purpose, he first endeavouring to secure her affection, he tries to render himself necessary to her repose, that he may have the cruel pleasure of triumphing in her pain, of boasting that he has occasioned those sighs she cannot suppress; and that the effects of her credulity and sensibility are evident in her palid face and dejected air; He abandons her to this conscious distress, while elated with his conquest, he seeks another to add to the number of his victories. Thus he rewards the friendship of the father, and the unsuspecting daughter, whose want of knowledge in the world, and too partial an opinion of her faithless admirer, constitutes her sole error. Know you this picture, Mr. Edgecomb? or are the traits still too favourable? was your designs still blacker than those of merely gratifying your vanity at the expence of that tenderness it made you

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fancy I had for you? For the honour of human nature I will hope not. It now only remains to undeceive you, from the vision of fancy you have so long enjoyed, and to convince you, that the partiality you have vainly imagined, exists nowhere but in your own brain. When you were first introduced to my father's by Major Seymour, he spoke of you in the highest terms imaginable, dictated, I have no doubt, by your merit and his friendship; he described you as a young man untainted with the vices that so often adhere to the profession; open, generous, sincere, and fond of study. He shall be welcome to my house, my purse, and my friendship, whenever he needs it, was the answer of my father; his uncle was the chosen friend of my youth, and I shall regard his beloved nephew as the brother of my Caroline. You came. I will flatter you so far as to say, your appearance and the foregoing introduction preposessed us all in your favour; my father was loud in your praise, but I solemnly assure you, I was disappointed; and if ever you saw a blush upon my face at your approach, it was that of indignation, and mortification;

I saw

I saw from the first day, that you were not partial to the conversation of women; the constraint you laboured under was evident, and nothing but the respect I owed you as the friend of my father could have induced me to listen to those trifling conversations, not more irksome for you to support than for me to hear. Thus Mr. Edgecomb, you have been mistaken in me; profit another time by the knowledge, that there are some women in the world not only possessed of sufficient fortitude to resist your attractions, but one who freely tells you the errors you have committed, and cautions you in future to disbelieve the suggestions of vanity. I say nothing of your last night's behaviour; I trust a moment's reflection has shewn you the impropriety of it, and in that hope I freely accord the pardon you solicit without being obliged to credit the reasons you alledge. I have not so high an opinion of my own merit as to imagine your professions other than the result of the mistake you have laboured under, and perhaps a language you may fancy most pleasing to female ears; to some it may, but candour will, I hope, exempt the generality of the sex from

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placing

placing their sole delight in adulation. I have perhaps erred again in your eyes, by thus freely communicating my sentiments, but the delicacy of the subject must plead my excuse, in wishing to clear up a misunderstanding so prejudicial to my repose, and dangerous to my character. I think you have a soul open to conviction, and possessed of sufficient generosity to despise your past conduct, and guard more carefully the future.

CAROLINE.

The effect of this letter it is impossible to describe. I cursed my own vanity, I execrated the too great partiality of the Major, which had made him imagine what he perhaps wished really existed. I flew to his apartment, I stamped, I roared, and unable to utter what I wished, I flung the letter of Caroline upon his table and rushed out of the house, and unknowing what I did, strolled into the fields. My feet insensibly carried me to the plantation, and so absent was I, that I talked aloud to myself; I came near the place where the preceding evening I had offended

fended Miss Ratcliff, I flung myself upon the ground; I was in absolute agony, when lifting up my head, I saw approaching hastily towards me, Caroline, the cause of my disquiet. Oh, beloved charming creature, how evidently did her emotion betray what her delicacy would have concealed; but in that moment I not only adored, but I revered her as a being of a superior order. She ran to me, Mr. Edgecomb, whence arises this disorder? has any accident happened; my God! how pale you are! you have lost your hat. This was the first moment I perceived that I had in my transport forgot to take one. Her solicitous concern overpowered me still more than her reproaches, and unable to answer her, I flung myself at her feet, and covered my face with her gown; she still in the sweetest accents, and even with tears, intreated me to rise and tell her if any misfortune had arrived to me that her father's friendship could alleviate. At length my voice found way. Ah, Carolina, I exclaimed, why do you pity me? how unworthy am I of these tears, of this tender concern; base wretch who assayed to trifle with your unblemished purity! You have

opened my eyes, and this distress you behold, is the consequence of seeing my error in the proper light you represented it; may I hope that contrition and time will merit fully that pardon your generosity accorded me?

Caroline would hear no more, but compelled me to rise. I was confident, said she with a smile, that we had only mistaken each other, I saw plainly that you acted not according to the natural dictates of your soul. I assure you, said she, offering her hand to me, from this moment all that is passed shall be forgot by me; respect me in future as the daughter of your friend, and your presence will be ever welcome to me.

Her noble manner of reconciling me to myself, filled me with wonder; I was sensible of my own unworthiness and of the contemptible part I had acted, but Caroline was too amiable, too much beloved, for her commands not to be obeyed; I stifled my remorse, I endeavoured to speak with composure, but the hand I held was that of Caroline; the sweet smiles I beheld were hers, she seemed a mild, a benign angel, diffusing peace to my soul, and to be collected was impossible; I could
only

only utter incoherent sentences. She kept still advancing towards the house! when we had nearly reached it, I will not press you, said she, to enter to-night, my father esteems you too much for your disorder to escape his penetration, but when you are a little more calm, we shall see you as usual. Adieu.

She was going, but I caught her by the gown; Caroline, adorable Caroline! I exclaimed, retract your pardon, withdraw your proffered friendship, if the engagement of them are to be purchased by ceasing to adore you! She interrupted me, be cautious, said she, or I will see you no more: because I act with frankness and forgive you so easily a mistake, must you presume upon that candour to offend me again? Adieu, Mr. Edgecomb, continued she, and let this subject be forgot. She stayed not for an answer; and I returned to my lodgings in a state of mind bordering upon distraction; I found there the Major, who unable to trace my foot-steps, had waited my return, or some news of me, with an emotion little short of my own, for he feared some desperate action from the state of mind I was in. He shook me by the hand very cordially, and en-

deavoured to sooth me; he was now successful, as the violent rage he first saw me in had subsided into a deep melancholy.

I told him every thing which had passed. He blamed my general opinion of the sex; and my tenets being much shook by what had passed, he had little trouble to overthrow the whole system. Now, said he, you allow the justice of my reasoning; be assured that my first intelligence is not without some foundation. I dare not flatter myself, my dear Major, said I, the first looks and words of Caroline raised hope in my breast, but the last has chilled it beyond a possibility of renovation. The Major continued with me till midnight; I endeavoured to compose myself to rest, but it was impossible. I rose as soon as it was light, and sat down with a resolution of writing to Miss Ratclif; I wrote above twenty letters, and tore them as soon as finished; at length I sent the following.

My dear Madam,

THINK me not presumptuous, or wishing to afford you fresh cause

cause for displeasure, but it is impossible for me to exist deprived of your smiles; and unless I have your permission to adore you. But misapprehend me not, Caroline, the love I now offer you is founded upon the highest esteem, upon the knowledge that you possess still more virtues of mind than graces of person; all I petition for is, the liberty of sometimes telling you, that I love; I ask for no return, till by a probation of my sincerity, I merit it in your eyes. I have no longer the execrable vanity you so justly despised; my heart abhors it, and recoils with horror from the remembrance.

I acknowledge the trifling opinion I had of your sex, but I recant that opinion. You have taught me the fallacy of those doctrines I so implicitly believed; and from your lips I must await the decision of my future fate.

Depart not, O Caroline, from your accustomed generosity, by bidding me hope. Give me a second time life. You tell me continually of your father's friendship; perhaps it may extend even to the calling me his son. Am I too presuming, beloved mistress of my destiny? if I am, a word, a look, is more than sufficient to check

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me;

me ; but, ah, deprive me not quite o hope, unless you desire never to behold me more alive. I left you last night displeased with the renewal of a subject I had too recently given you occasion to dread ; but it was too closely interwoven with my existence to enable me to forbear. Your last words will never be erased from my memory ; and yet I merit your distrust, your scorn, and even your hatred ; and were you possessed of confined ideas, and a narrow soul, I would sooner expire with chagrin, than attempt to soften you ; but I know the mind of Caroline, it is unveiled before me, and she can judge when it is proper to forgive, as well as she knows the season for resentment ; revoke then the dreadful sentence, ‘ If you continue to love, you see me no more.’ Permit me by assiduity, tender respect, and ardent love, to hope one day to enjoy that portion of your esteem my consummate vanity induced me to think I already possess : happy, if after years of submissive adoration, I may indeed attain it. I shall pay my respects as usual to the family this evening. Ah, Caroline, let me read in your eyes, that my petition is not totally rejected ;
you

you will observe in mine nothing but anxious incertitude, and the effects of many hours restless and tormenting anguish. I can scarce persuade myself to conclude I am writing to you, and thousands of different thoughts occur; I dread it may be the last time I may without offence enjoy that privilege, and I am conscious that my words do not express half what I wish you to know, yet I must break off, my duty obliges me, and I can only add, that I am

Your reclaimed profligate,

G. EDGECOMB.

I sent this billet to Miss Ratcliff, and accompanied by the Major, ventured to Sir Richard's as early after dinner as decorum would permit. I found a great deal of company, and many officers, friends of ours, were present.

Sir Richard enquired where we had hid ourselves, for, continued he, I called twice this morning, intending to bring you home to dinner, but could find neither. The truth was, the Major breakfasted with me, and not being
in

in a situation to bear company, I had ordered myself to be denied. Seymour found easily an excuse for our absence, but not so easy a one for my altered looks, which Sir Richard noticed in such a manner, that I could scarce evade his enquiries. I assured him I had been very unwell, but I dissembled so awkwardly, that he shook his head, and said, this evasion is not well to me, young man; but observing my confusion, come, come, said he, this is a day of jubilee with me, recover your spirits and congratulate my daughter, this is her birth-day; and he presented me to her. What I said I know not, it was some confused compliment, which I am convinced Caroline could not hear, and indeed her confusion was little short of my own; her father was too much occupied with the pleasures of the day to observe it, and taking her hand and putting it in mine, I have told every body, said he, that Caroline was engaged for the ball we have to-night, because I had long promised myself the pleasure of seeing her dance again with you, and should have been horridly disappointed if you had not come. Her father then left us to speak to some of the company,
and

and I remained near Caroline; I did not see any signs of disgust or anger in her countenance, there was a soft languor in her manner, which gave me some encouragement, but I dared not anticipate my fate by enquiring. We opened the ball; Caroline was as usual, easy and graceful; I never acquitted myself so ill, as all my comrades assured me, and the ball was half over before I could bring myself to dance with the least degree of spirit. After supper we recommenced the ball, and after dancing near two hours, Caroline complained of fatigue, and we sat down in the corner of the saloon. Here was the long wished for moment, I seized it, and with a tremulous voice enquired if she had received a billet in the morning from me. I did, sir, said she, in a cold accent, and I think you were—she was prevented continuing by a gentleman, whose name I shall suppress, because we have since been good friends; he had drank rather freely, and advancing with great gaiety and freedom, so said he, the lovely Caroline prefers a tete-a-tete to the pleasures of the dance.—What a happy fellow you are, George. I perceived the crimson flushing into the cheeks of
Miss

Miss Ratcliff, her displeasure irritated mine, I took his arm, a word with you, sir, that Lady is not to be spoke to so lightly, and I drew him into the garden. Caroline, as I afterwards heard, imagining my meaning from my looks, flew to find her father, that he might prevent mischief. I had already inflamed my antagonist's choler equal to my own, and seizing our swords, we were just beginning to engage, as Sir Richard and Major Seymour came up. They beat down our swords and interposed. I raved like a madman, and reproached Sir Richard with the little concern he took in the affront offered to his daughter. My antagonist was dragged away by his friends, and upon our return to the house, I saw some person lie by the steps; I advanced. My God! it was the charming Caroline, who had fainted with terror. I bore her to an apartment, and in my transport I revealed the secret, which her father began already to suspect from the late transaction. The company were dispersing very fast, and the Major, who perceived the altered aspect of Sir Richard, urged me repeatedly to go. The moment I see Miss Ratcliff better, I will, was my answer.

At

At last she opened her eyes. Where, where is he? was her first exclamation. Her eyes rested upon me, and a sweet blush gave her new charms; I dared not hazard any longer the evident displeasure of her father, and bowing upon her hand fervently, wished her recovery from the terror I had occasioned, and took my leave with the Major. As we rode home, I acquainted him with the particulars of the quarrel, of which he was before ignorant. The next morning I received an early visit from Sir Richard, his manner was cold, and his words still colder; after a vast deal of preparation, he intreated me not to be offended if he requested I would forbear to visit at his house during the short time he resided in the country. I looked, as I was confounded and surprized; Sir Richard, said I, have I ever during my visits to your house behaved in such a manner that this prohibition is become necessary? No, answered he, I esteem you as much as ever; but I have a daughter, and you last night—confessed I adore her, I exclaimed—true, continued he, and though your family and fortune both entitle you to pretend to Miss Ratclif, yet as I have other views for her, I
must

must request you to forbear seeing her. You may, cried I, hinder my beholding——but you cannot oblige me to desist from adoring her. I spoke perhaps with too haughty an accent these words, for he rose in anger. I thought as a friend, cried he, I might have been heard, but I find it otherwise; I renounce you for ever, and Caroline shall no longer forget the duty she owes her father. He then left me in anger, nor did I essay to hinder him.

Major Seymour, that worthy friend, after hearing this new distress of mine, went to Sir Richard's, and took no notice of what had passed; he saw Caroline languid and drooping; he seized an opportunity and pleaded my cause so successfully, that Caroline was prevailed upon to write a few lines and send by him; he galloped all the way home, and come into my apartment out of breath with his haste. I stayed not to thank him before I tore open the letter, and found the wishes of my heart gratified, and the hope I had cherished from the night before confirmed, by the dear hand of my Caroline: these were her words.

“ AFTER

“ A F T E R the discovery you must have made last night, dissimulation were vain. Yes I will acknowledge, I trembled for your safety, and while I have life I will never forget your endeavour to vindicate me; yet to what purpose am I practising our mutual pain, my father has sworn with his consent I never shall be yours, he has destined me to be the pledge of his esteem to one of his intimate friends, who will return ere long to England. I am, I acknowledge, but too much disinclined to obey his commands, and never, never will I marry a man whom I can neither love nor esteem. I write freely, Mr. Edgecomb, I am encouraged so to do by the difference of your manner, and I think you will never again give me occasion to repent, but let me not be meanly selfish, if it is possible, forget me, obliterate from your memory that you have ever seen or esteemed me; but if that is impossible, you will have the poor comfort of knowing, that there is a person in the world who shares your pain, and will remember to the last moment of life with
plea-

pleasure that she has been esteemed by you. I cannot describe the rage of my father after your departure last night; my aunt was your advocate, she esteems and admires your candour, and noble acknowledgment of your errors; for I will not conceal from you that I take not a single step without acquainting her. She thought my father's friendship would have dictated far other behaviour towards you; but we are all deceived. I imagine by not seeing you with the Major, that he has in reality put his threats in execution, and forbid you visiting us again. For my sake bear calmly this indignity, and try not to see me, for upon no account will I permit of private interviews unauthorized by Lady Hinchliffe; upon her known prudence I implicitly rely, and our future correspondence must be limited by her discretion. I almost blame myself for suffering the Major to prevail upon me to give you this confirmation of a sensibility I wished to conceal, but he painted your distress in such lively terms, that Lady Hinchliffe joined with him in requesting I would afford you this satisfaction. Adieu.

For

For heaven's sake avoid Captain —— or if he offers an apology, admit it; I do not think he had any intention of offending; but I charge you, carry the idea of revenge no farther, as it would afford too great a scope for conversation, and I am not ambitious of becoming the subject. Once more, adieu.

C. R."

These hasty lines contributed not a little to tranquilize my soul, the assurances of the Major afforded still more reason to hope; he related to me the conversation that had passed; he told me how strongly Lady Hinchliffe was my friend, and I suffered myself to be flattered with the belief that her influence was of sufficient weight with the Colonel to induce him to alter the decision he had made. How soon is hope raised in youthful minds of an enthusiastic turn! I was ere the night finished, as happy in my mind as I had before been miserable. It afforded great subject for enquiry, the sudden coolness subsisting between Sir Richard and myself, but all were at a loss to ascribe the motive. At the next assembly I had the transporting pleasure of seeing
Caroline,

Caroline, I paid my compliments, but did not as usual remain near her; I declined dancing to have the opportunity of entertaining Lady Hinchliffe unobserved. This amiable woman told me that her brother's principal failing was an invincible obstinacy, which often rendered him blind even to his own proper interest; but, added she, he is not unforgiving. I fully convinced her of the sincerity of my passion, and even presumed to hint a private marriage sanctioned by her presence. Have patience, said she, we may not be drove to such a disagreeable expedient. She gave me permission to meet them sometimes when they walked out, but let it be very seldom, added she, and merit my endeavours to serve you by obeying what I ordain. I bowed assent, and by her means I spoke to Caroline for about five minutes. In a state of perpetual anxiety I passed six months; never before had winter seemed half so dreary; in the spring Lady Hinchliffe went to pass a little time at her estate, in the North of England. I saw her before she went, she smiled; I was, said she, going to deprive you of Caroline for a few months, but I have altered my design,
if

if you can obtain leave of absence on some pretext or other, my doors will not be shut against you as a visitor, though I cannot without committing an impropriety in regard to Caroline, receive you under my roof. With what transport I kissed the hand of this sincere friend, I obtained without difficulty leave of absence for six months; my excuse was, the wish my father expressed to see me. I went indeed to him without delay; I opened my heart before him, nor did I conceal the smallest circumstance. He entertained the same thoughts as myself, that were we once united, Sir Richard would soon be reconciled. I wrote often to Caroline, during the few weeks I staid at my father's; Lady Hinchliffe always answered me: at length I pressed her more urgently than I had ever before done, encouraged by the approbation of my father, to consent to be mine. I assured her of my unalterable affection, and esteem. In my father's name, I offered her my hand and his paternal blessing; in short it was truly the language of love, which flowed from my pen. I thought of no consequence that could possibly be otherwise than agreeable

agreeable to my wishes; I painted our future felicity, and repeated the promise my father had made, of interceding for us, when once married and sheltered under his roof. I waited her answer with impatience, the letter was delivered me, wrote by the hand of Caroline herself; it was thus:

“ WHY do you all combine to shake that inviolable obedience I owe the author of my being; I am fully convinced if I comply with your solicitation, heaven, offended at my want of duty and regard to the dictates of paternal authority, will sooner or later punish my fault; perhaps make you the instrument of its vengeance. The violence of your passion makes you at present blind to the future, but when possessed of the object of your wishes, and have nothing further to hope on her account, perhaps your imagination will pourtray her conduct in such a light, that though you still love, you must cease to esteem her. Thus you yourself would become my punishment upon earth, for from the moment your esteem should be withdrawn, my misery must commence. Unhappy that union, where
either

either party has reason to think lightly of the other. Will you not be apt to imagine, that the woman who could so easily forget her duty to a parent, might do the same to a husband? will not suspicions be ever arising in your mind, and you will say to yourself, why did I marry a woman so devoid of principle? Remember Mr. Edgecomb, that a disobedient daughter can never make a good wife.. Ah, vanquish then the idea which at present occupies too much your thoughts, avoid seeing me, and by amusements endeavour to dissipate the remembrance of Caroline; assure the kind Sir William of my gratitude for his kind offers, and desire him to believe, that could my father's consent be obtained, it would be the second happiness of my life to call him father, but that consent can never be obtained. Ah, Edgecomb, my fortitude forsakes me, the same hand that not an hour ago brought me your letter, has just presented one of a far different nature, it was from my father, and the severest he ever wrote; it exhorts me to duty and obedience, and tells me, that at my return home he shall introduce his intended son-in-law. Too well I know

know the character of this man; he is full of artifice, and though yet young, is old in vice. Why should I conceal his name? It is Lord Lindsay, whose dissipated life is well known; he has been abroad some time, but I hear has not forgot his accustomed manner of life; he buried a most amiable and worthy father a short time since in France, and has two sisters, the eldest of whom is nearly the same age as yourself. I can no longer dissemble my aversion to this detested match. Oh, Edgecomb, be my friend, divest yourself of the lover, and tell me how I shall avoid Lord Lindsay and not disobey my father; my aunt is too firmly your friend, to consult her upon the occasion, it is you I supplicate to strive with your inclinations, and advise me what to do. I am overpowered with melancholy, tears fall, and almost obliterate my lines, I rely upon your honour; what can I say more, than obey what it dictates?

C. R."

The moment I had read this letter, I carried it to my father, he seconded my impatience to be gone, and advised me to lose no time in persuading

ing Caroline, and securing her hand; for, added he, it would rejoice me more, knowing as I do her worth, to follow her to the grave, than to behold her the wife of Lord Lindsay. A young libertine is a bad character, but there may be some hopes of a reformation, but an old one is of all characters the most detestable, and more to be feared by a delicate and virtuous woman than a beast of prey.

The instant my chaise was ready I sat off, and travelling night and day, arrived at Lady Hinchliffe's time enough for breakfast the second morning; Caroline was pouring out the tea as I entered, and her surprize was so great that the tea-pot fell from her hand, and added to the confusion my sudden appearance had caused. I apologized to her aunt for my abrupt entrance, but she waved it by telling me with a smile, my business required no excuse; Caroline blushed, and gave me a look of reproach. I remained some few weeks a daily visiter, before I could overcome the delicate scruples of my Caroline; at length her aunt and myself prevailed, and one morning under the pretence of a visit, we met at the Rector's, who had

too many obligations to Lady Hinchliffe not to accord with her request of secretly uniting us. His garden led to the church, which we entered unobserved, and from the hand of his brother I received my adored Caroline. The wishes of my heart were compleated, and the joy of our good aunt nearly equalled mine; she presented Caroline with ten thousand pounds on the day of her marriage, and we agreed to keep it a profound secret till the time of her return home. Never did two months pass so charming or so swift. The time was drawing near when Sir Richard expected his daughter, and she began to tremble with apprehension of the discovery which was near approaching. In vain I encouraged her, ever timid and delicate, she reproached herself without ceasing for not having sooner disclosed it. Our misfortunes were now commencing, and the short period of our happiness was no more.

One morning as we were walking out, Lady Hinchliffe was taken very ill; with difficulty I supported her to the house, she was put to bed, but continued getting worse. Send, said she to me, in a feeble voice, my dear nephew,

phew, for my brother, I would see him if possible reconciled to your marriage, it would smoothe the last hours of my life. I dispatched an express for Sir Richard, and attended without seeing our benefactors and friend. The evening of the second day she expired, after taking an affectionate and tender leave of us.

Caroline's distress alarmed me for her health; the loss of her beloved aunt, the dread of seeing her father, combined to reduce her to a situation of affliction which almost distracted me. I had her led to her own apartment, and forgetting, and indeed not caring to use my accustomed precaution of seeming to leave the house after supper, and returning by a master key through the garden, I remained sitting by her bedside the whole night. She was sensible of this attention, but could only answer to my tender intreaties of moderating her fears, by sighs and tears; towards morning she began to slumber, and worn out with watching and fatigue whilst I held her in my arms, I reclined my head upon the pillow, and was just asleep, when the violent bursting open of the door awakened

wakened us, and in the same moment we both beheld her father. Caroline shrieked, and flinging herself again into my arms, as for protection, hid her face from beholding her father. It seems he was just arrived, and the servants having first told him the disease of their mistress, naturally adverted to what had surprized them extremely, namely my having passed the night in the apartment of Miss Ratclif. Upon enquiring he found the time I had been here, and in all the rage of revenge for what he believed the disgrace of his family, he burst open the door, and found his suspicions sufficiently justified by my presence. He had not at first words to upbraid his daughter, and when his passion found way, he called us both by every opprobrious name fancy could suggest.

I bore a great deal, though my colour frequently rose in my cheeks; but I looked at my poor Caroline, half dead with fear; I remembered it was her father, and I sustained his reproaches; at length, when the first torrent of his passion was abated, Caroline ventured to lift up her eyes. Ah, Sir, said she, I am culpable, I have indeed disobeyed you, but let nature plead

plead for me in your bosom, reject not your supplicating Caroline; and she knelt before him. I advanced to second her petition, but, God of Heaven sustain me while I relate what the very remembrance of chills me with horror, he struck her! guided only by passion, and refusing to hear reason, he struck the unfortunate Caroline to the earth! Happy for him, and indeed for us all, that the violence of my love made my wife the first object of my regard. After he had committed this barbarous action, he quitted the room. I raised her, I chafed her temples, and by degrees brought her to herself; she shed not a tear, her manner alarmed me, I pressed her in my arms, I intreated her to remember that I was her husband, that she had still my love to rely upon, and in mine a father who would receive her with the tenderest affection. She seemed to listen to me, but answered only by pressing my hand.

I rallied my scattered thoughts, and determined to go and candidly explain every thing to her father; I concluded the greatest displeasure he could shew was, to banish us from his sight; and I flattered myself time might operate a great deal in our favour. I found him

much cooler, and far less harsh than I expected. Ah, Caroline, little did I think thy father possessed so implacable a spirit, and that in the moment that I vainly hoped his paternal blessing would not be long withheld, he was meditating the severest blow possible to divide us.

Mr. and Mrs. Ratclif were present, relations of the deceased lady. He heard my confession of our marriage with tolerable patience, but assured me he did not credit a word of what I said; it is easy, said he, to fabricate a tale of what we wish, and with the credulous part of the world, it may pass very well, but you are mistaken in me, young man; Caroline, that beloved child, whom I have reared from her infancy with such tender care, and uncommon love, would never have shewn such terror at the sight of her father if she had not disgraced him. You have basely taken advantage of her pious sorrow for my fainting sister, and rendered her an object of scorn and pity.

Irritated as I was almost to madness, at this unjust aspersions of my beloved wife, I yet endeavoured to master my rage. Sir Richard, I exclaimed, with
a voice

a voice trembling with emotion, no man but yourself should thus call my honour in question, but you are the father of my Caroline, and my love for her demands respect and submission to you; under this roof I forbear to tell you the injustice you do us both; my reverence for the amiable and ever regretted deceased, allows not of dispute, but I will another time, and in another place, justify my claims. With these words I left him.

I returned to Caroline, and related all that had passed. She was much better, and proposed seeing Sir Richard herself; I rather opposed it, remembering the scene of the morning. Mr. and Mrs. Ratclif both came to us; they likewise seemed to disbelieve our marriage, though Caroline confirmed all that I said on the subject; at last I intreated them to suspend their judgment till my return, that I would go and fetch hither the Rector, whose testimony I hoped would be sufficient to convince them. Mrs. Ratclif seemed inclined to pity us, be quick then, said she, for without some proof Sir Richard will never permit his daughter to leave this house with you. We shall see, replied I, colouring with rage, who

has power to deprive me of my beloved wife. Adieu, my Caroline, I hasten to justify my claim to your affection.

I almost flew to the parsonage, the good old man hesitated not a moment, but snatching up his hat, followed my impatient steps. We were already near the house, when crossing a meadow close to the wood, we observed a post-chaise and four driving at a great rate. My heart misgave me, and the shrieks of Caroline, who exclaimed, My husband! my dear husband, save me! confirmed the dismal conjecture. I flew after the chaise; alas, my feeble limbs seconded not the impetuous efforts of my spirits, and I sunk senseless to the ground.

The good Rector hastened after me, he raised, he soothed; and in fine, persuaded me to live, and endeavour to assist my wife in obtaining her liberty. When we came to the house, I found Mrs. Ratclif in tears. Oh, Mr. Edgcomb, said she, exculpate us from any share in the event which distresses you, all that persuasion on my husband's side and tears on mine could do to soften our obdurate relation, has been tried, but in vain, his route is to the
nearest

nearest sea-port, and he is determined to shut his daughter in some remote convent, to atone for her imaginary fault; I call it imaginary, for I am fully convinced of her innocence and your honour. Never, never, while I live, shall I forget her shrieks and tears; she struggled, she called upon you, upon her dear aunt, but Sir Richard was deaf to her cries; and attentive only to the suggestions of his own obstinacy, has not scrupled to violate the respect he owes to the memory of his amiable sister, by this flagrant outrage under her roof.

As soon as she had finished, I was for setting out, but they represented to me my pursuit could answer no end but a tragical one, and that the possession of Caroline by force could not be effected, but by the death of her father. The Rector advised me to commence a process against Sir Richard, and oblige him to do me justice. At the same moment Mr. Rateliff put into my hand the will of Lady Hinchliffe; it was inscribed, "to be opened by my dear nephew, Mr. G. Edgecomb." There, said he, is a convincing proof. I opened it, but, my God, how confused was I at the contents! Except a few lega-

cies, this generous relation had made me her sole executor. I staid till the last duties were rendered her, and then hastened to London, where my father met me, agreeable to my request. He entered fully into my distress, and I commenced a prosecution immediately; but of what utility was all my trouble? Sir Richard never appeared to defend himself, and though the law would have accorded me great part of his fortune for his default, and have given me power to take my wife wherever I could find her, yet it was of no use, as I wanted not an addition to my riches, and was ignorant of the route he had taken. Without waiting its slow decision, I set off disguised, and travelled through France, without being able to trace him, or discover my Caroline.

About a few leagues from Lyons, I received the following letter, forwarded express by my father, whose impatience could only be surpassed by my own, for he admired the choice of my heart.

TO MR. EDGECOMB.

“RECOGNIZE, my dear, my beloved husband, the character of your
Caroline;

Caroline; it is now six months since our cruel separation, and I have in vain endeavoured to convey even a letter safe to you; this think will not fail, but, ah! delay not, hasten to my rescue, or I am lost for ever. In vain hitherto has been my sighs, my complaints; they have been borne far from you by the pitiless, the remorseless winds! In vain have I protested my marriage, they pretend to disbelieve me, and all that I alledge to vindicate the truth of what I say, they look upon as a proof of my disgrace. Insensible from early youth to the endearing ties of wife and mother, the inhabitants of the cheerless walls treat my complaints with harshness, and my misery with unfeeling coldness. Ah, Edgecomb, my situation makes me bold, I will risk even life itself by escaping from hence, to preserve the dear unborn pledge of our love: hasten then to receive, or assist me. Three leagues from Montpellier stands my prison, enquire for Madame St. Rue, whose chateau is close by it, she will acquaint you of my escape, or the means by which you may facilitate it. To that generous lady I am indebted for the hope of liberty; the sweet hope

of once more beholding the beloved author of my present sufferings. Ah, Mr. Edgecomb, perhaps you cease to love the unhappy female who has caused you so much uneasiness; but I wrong your generosity, I forget you are not the unthinking Edgecomb I first knew, but a man replete with sentiments the most refined, and a heart capable of love and unalterable affection; but I forget while writing to you, the horrid doom that awaits me; I forget I am immured here for ever, and that my father, incapable of deviating from an opinion he has once formed, intending to hide me for ever from a family he imagines I have disgraced, has given to this convent an immense sum to receive me within a shorter time than they generally allow. I have undergone all the rigours of religion aided by mistaken misguided zeal; they tell me I have passed the first terms of introduction; if I have it was done in a moment of phrenzy, when reason tottered in her seat and knew not what passed; they have attired me in the habit of a novice, and preparations are making——for what——to oblige me to renounce my husband——never! tortures nor death shall oblige me
to

to pronounce the vows. Deaf to every voice but that of interest, they regard not the odium I shall bring upon their order in a short time. They believe it not, and my complaints, my tears are rejected with an air that chills my soul. Madame St. Rue alone pities me, she has wept with me, she has re-echoed my sighs; compassion is in her nature, and she has promised to protect me. Are these the delights we so often promised ourselves? Is this the mansion of paternal love? or these frigid cloisters the abode of domestic happiness? Ah, no! the sad reverse is but too plain; immured within walls the aching eye can scarce measure the height of, I perceive nothing but austerity and the prospect of death. My cell, ah, how dismal, and yet if you were within it, I often think it would lose half its horrors.

My dear aunt, had Heaven in compassion to us spared her life, this separation might never have been. Ah, should you arrive too late! but I will not encourage the thought; they may decorate me as their victim, and lead me before the altar of my God; at that sacred fane I pronounced those vows which sealed me yours; and in the same place

place will I ratify them, and protest against all others. Perhaps it is ordained we should never meet again!—more than death is in the thought! but if so my beloved husband will respect my memory, and guard it from insult, remember the pride I took in being called yours; and drop a tender and affectionate tear to my memory——but I will chase away the image of despair; hope flutters round my heart, and I will not shrink from this trial of my fortitude; I will endeavour to escape, I will fly for refuge to those arms that have before sustained me in the moment of affliction, and find my safety with him who will never deceive me. I say nothing of my father, I owe life to him, and I have disobeyed him; he has carried his displeasure far, very far, but the hour of forgiveness may yet arrive, and the smiles of pleasure beam upon his beloved daughter.

Madame St. Rue has sent to request seeing me, it is for my letter; in vain has she tried to soften my father or change his purpose; inflexible to the last degree, he answers not; nor from the moment of his leaving me here, have I seen or heard from him; she tells me he is still here, avoid him if
you

you value my life; I need not say upon your being concealed from him depends all the success of my project. Adieu, my dear Edgecomb, I trust you will come soon enough to second the impatient wishes of

Your faithful

C. EDGECOMB."

I was not long, as may easily be imagined, after the receipt of this letter, in taking the road to the village in which the convent stood. Many times I read it in the course of my journey. I enjoined the post-boys to be speedy, and I soon arrived. I enquired for Madame St. Rue. My heart died within me, when they told me she was at the convent of St. De——, to see a lady take the veil. I flew to the church of the convent, it was crowded; my appearance attracted universal notice, my hair blew in the wildest disorder, my eyes sparkled with rage, and my whole frame was agitated; way was instantly made for me through the croud, and I got close to the altar. My eyes soon found what they sought, my ador-
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ed Caroline almost fainting with terror within the grate, and her cruel father without, exulting at the sacrifice he was exerting his interest to complete. The white habit she wore, her beautiful hair yet uncut flowing loosely over her shoulders, her pale interesting countenance, all contributed to petrify me at the sight. The ceremony was beginning, I advanced, and with a firm voice I cried to the Bishop, minister of God, desist from this sacrilege! her vows are mine already, and registered in that book from which the hand of man can never erase them. Caroline who had been supported by two nuns, no sooner heard my voice, than raising her eyes to behold me, 'Tis he indeed, she exclaimed with enthusiastic transport, and endeavouring to break from those who sustained her, and failing in the attempt, fainted away. I ran to the grate, and in my transport beat myself violently against those cruel bars, which prevented my embracing her.

Sir Richard was not an idle spectator, he spoke much to the Bishop, but he was truly a good man, and my words had sunk deep into his mind. I must examine this matter closely said he, ere I proceed further; come to me to-morrow,

morrow, turning to me with a benevolent smile, if the Lady is really your wife, I have no power to detain her, and justice shall be done you.

I kneeled at his feet, words were denied, to express my gratitude; he held to me his hand, a tear dropped upon that hand, it was the tear of sensibility and dear to my soul, because shed for my Caroline; I turned towards her, she raised her languid head, be cheerful, my love, I cried, to-morrow we shall be again united. It is too late was her answer.

It vibrates still in my ears, it strikes still through my soul! a dying paleness overspread her face and she reclined upon the bosom of a nun. The curtain was drawn between us; the busy crowd gathered round me, and I suffered myself to avoid their curiosity, to be led to the palace of the Bishop. His words were those of benevolence, dictated by religion; he insisted upon my remaining with him till the next day, when he promised to release me my Caroline, but he could not before, as some necessary forms were to be passed previous to it; he gave me permission to write, I availed myself of it to comfort my beloved wife; I poured out
to

to her the rapture I felt at the thoughts of to morrow, and rested more tranquil than I had ever done since our first separation, little imagining the severe blow I was to experience on the impatiently expected morrow.

The instant every thing was ready, the good Bishop accompanied me to the convent, we entered the first court, and I was struck with the sound of the agony bell. The Bishop demanded 'at the grate, who was expiring. Great God! how unutterable was my anguish! —they answered——Caroline.——I fell senseless at the feet of my venerable friend; he raised me in his arms, and I was conveyed to his house; proper remedies soon recovered me, and in a state of calmness I listened to the consolation he offered me. I gave him the letters of Caroline; he blamed the sisters for their incredulity, and thinking me more composed, acquainted me with the particulars he had learnt of her death.

The ill-fated Caroline had endeavoured, it seems, to escape, but was detected and brought back to her wretched prison with ignominy; the ceremony was hastened on this account. Things were represented very different

to the Bishop to what they really were, who imagined he was doing her the most essential service instead of the greatest injury; but the frame of Caroline was too delicate to sustain so many shocks. The disappointment of being prevented, the fear that I knew not where she was, nor the danger she was in, the awful ceremony beginning, which she was alone to combat, joined with the sudden surprise of beholding me, overpowered her weakened, exhausted frame, and threw her into labour, which was attended with convulsions; she recovered from them, to know she was a mother. Madame St. Rue was permitted to see her in this dreadful moment; she saw her press the dear infant to her bosom; she wrote what her affection for me dictated in this last trial; she caught her last sighs, she beheld those beauteous these angelic eyes set for ever, deprived of lustre. Ah, why was it denied me to clasp her that instant in my arms? The awful spectacle would perhaps happily have deprived me at the same time of life, one grave would have held us, and one stone would have testified that love which death could not sever. It was not judged proper yet to deli-

deliver me the letter. I enquired for my child, the only pledge left of my Caroline's love! they told me Madame St. Rue had taken it, but it had died a few hours after. I still remained in a stupor till my attention was roused by the last bell for my beloved wife, I would go to the church, I would behold her once more, no force could hinder me; the grate was surrounded by people, but they all gave place to me; my sorrows were respected, they were sacred, and I heard around me the sympathizing sighs, nay even groans; I raised my eyes, I beheld my only joy on earth extended on a sable bier, her habit was white, and her face still lovely. In one corner near me, I observed a man whose face was covered with his hands, his audible sobs first drew my attention, it was her father. Cruel and unfeeling man, this was thy work! Not even the death of his only child could ever induce him to forgive me, he mourned truly her loss, but always beheld me in the light of her seducer. At length by the command of the Bishop, the grate was opened, and for the last time I was to see the object of my fond love. I entered, courage failed, I was near fainting;

ing ; a friendly arm sustained me, and I at last approached the bed of death, I kissed her icy lips, I prest the dear hand which she had so cheerfully given me, it was cold, quite cold, and chilled my very blood. The priests advanced, they exhorted me to retire ; I articulated, my wife ! and sunk down by her side. A fever and delirium ensued, and for many weeks my life was despaired of.

My misfortunes, and the hard fate of poor Caroline raised me many friends. The good Bishop would not suffer me to be moved from his abode, and my obligations to him and the young Marquis de Roseville, his nephew, are innumerable. Providence thought fit to restore me to a life which I ought not to hate, as being his gift, but which the loss of Caroline has rendered tedious to me. Had my child been spared——but I must not murmur against Heaven.

My father came over on the first news of my illness, and found me recovering by slow degrees. The first thing we did was to enquire for Madame St. Rue, but we heard to our grief and astonishment that Lady was no inhabitant of the country, but was gone some weeks

weeks before no one knew whither. I never since could learn any thing respecting her.

As soon as I was judged out of danger of a relapse, they gave me the last incoherent lines of my unfortunate, my ever to be regretted Caroline.

“TOO late, my dear Edgcomb, is your tender solicitude, in vain all the transports you express; Caroline, ere you read this paper wet with her tears, will be no more. Ah, husband of my soul! is this the meeting I so long expected! is this the end of that delusive hope which fluttered round my heart! Alas, but I have deserved it all; I disobeyed my father, and heaven has avenged my disregard of its laws; but the poor penitent shall now rest in peace, for her father has pardoned her now that the hand of death lies heavy upon her, and she can offend no more. You have not either forgotten or forsaken me, and though deprived of the delight of beholding you, yet the unaltered truth, and the public justice you have this day done my character, too much injured by suspicions and incredulity, have softened the pains I have endured, and made my last hours of life more sweet
than

than those I have experienced for some months.——Unfortunate babe! how tranquil it sleeps, happy in insensibility, it knows not that in a few hours its mother will sink into her last peaceful sleep, and press it to her breast no more!

“I am almost exhausted with this effort, and it is to the pen of another I am indebted for rendering these dying sentences to my Edgecomb——My father comes!——Ah, Edgecomb, why cannot my father behold you with the same partial eyes that I have done? He has demanded my child; he has sworn to love her as he once did me, and to teach her not to despise the memory of her mother; but the hard condition is, she is never to know her father. And can I, ought I thus to wring the heart of my husband, and render the last action of my life odious in his sight? Unhappy babe, thus to become from thy birth the means of prolonging those dissensions which ought to be buried in the grave of Caroline; better thou hadst never seen the light, or that providence would allot thee to share my tomb. Adieu, my dear husband, my last breath will be a prayer for your happiness;

happiness ; and at this awful moment, soothed as I am by the kind assurances of unexpected friendship, you will perhaps one day find that my regard for you has extended itself beyond the grave, and the memory of your Caroline be rewarded with pleasure. Once more, adieu, the veil of immortality is rising fast ; I grow faint, may that God to whose presence I am hastening, protect my Edgecomb and our precious babe."

ADDED BY MADAME ST. RUE.

" IN ten minutes after, the lovely Caroline commenced an ANGEL:—tears hinder my proceeding.——I will not, Sir, augment your regret, by inlarging upon the merits of her you have lost ; they want not the air of panegyric to record them.

" Attentive to every thing concerning this amiable lady, I meant to have delivered into your own hands, the unfortunate babe, but heaven has disposed of it. Farewell, Mr. Edgecomb, I cannot trust myself to see you ; the remembrance of Mrs. Edgecomb is yet too recent for either to support an interview ;

interview; I still hear her last sighs, and I yet behold those angel hands raised in a prayer for you. May every pious wish of hers be fulfilled is the sincere desire of

CLARA ST. RUE."

Again were the but half-healed wounds of anguish unclosed; I had a dangerous relapse, and my father trembled for a life I was careless of preserving. Upon my recovery I resolved to travel, and by continual change of scene, endeavour to disperse the gloomy melancholy that had overspread my whole frame. Sir Richard Ratcliff still lives a prey to remorse, near the walls that contains the remains of his daughter.

For myself, though the keen edge of my grief is worn off, yet the memory of my Caroline will ever demand the tribute of a sigh, and the remainder of my days will be devoted to her; yes, shade off my ill-fated love, your Edgecomb will never cease to remember your sufferings, will never

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cease

314 JULIANA ORMESTON: OR,
cease to adore you, and at a future
period may we be united to *part no*
more.

LETTER LI.

MISS MARSDEN TO LADY HARCOURT.

MY dear Anna, I return herewith the manuscript Sir George had the complaisance to say we might peruse. I was extremely affected by it, but poor Juliana has almost wept herself blind; yet she derives comfort from the idea that she forbore ere too late, the crime of actual disobedience. Unfortunate Caroline, and yet more unfortunate Edgecomb, who survived to feel her loss, with every aggravation!

We are very dull here; Lady Ormeston and myself pass whole days, tete-a-tete, while my Lord is engaged in hunting, horse-racing, company, and a thousand diversions all round the country. Mr. Lumley set off yesterday express to visit a sick person, and Sophia

phia is returned to London, therefore, my dear Anna, for pity's sake transport yourself and nursery to Ormeston-House. I would not offend your new character (which, by the bye, becomes you so very well) so much as not to mention the nursery particularly; but we will not entirely confine you to it, in a fortnight the races at Ascot commence, and Mr. Lumley has promised that if possible he will return by that time. Lord Ormeston and the Viscount, we are well assured, will not neglect so fashionable a resort, therefore let us persuade you to join us, but you must expect a change.

Lord Ormeston's indifference is now so visible, that his ill-fated wife plainly perceives it; he treats her with a distant coolness, more cutting than reproaches; and is besides jealous to an excess; ———if we walk ten to one but we are watched; and though her actions are of the purest nature, there is no knowing how they may be construed.

As I have heard nothing further of Campbell, I trust reflection has convinced him of the impropriety of ever harbouring another thought of Juliana; and time may teach him the

necessity of being patient under a misfortune he cannot remedy.

I am far from happy myself; several ships are arrived from India without any news from Mr Osborn. It is cruel, considering how many a single line from him renders happy, that he should neglect any opportunity of affording them such a satisfaction.

I could just now be very angry with him, but it will answer no purpose, as the first letter will obliterate all. I shall go to Sanson-Vale very shortly; Delia has promised a visit to Ormeston House, on condition that I will spend the time of her absence with her mother. Most cheerfully shall I comply, for I love the dear woman with the fond affection of a child; I shall be also near Harcourt-Castle, which is another grand inducement. Hasten then, my dear Anna, your promised journey hither, and I will accompany you back to the Vale.

Charge Delia to write me if she has any news of her brother. I am wretched on his account, and was I to give way to thought should imagine ten thousand evils had befallen him.—The climate, the fatigues of body and mind, balancing between hope and fear,
all

all combined, may have affected his health, and afford a dreadful reason for his silence.

Lady Ormeston is herself too much of the penseroso to afford me much relief from my internal chagrin; come then, my dear Lady Harcourt, and by your cheerfulness dissipate the clouds which in spite of all my efforts and exertions of reason, lower and obscure the serenity of my days. Adieu.

C. MARSDEN.

LETTER LII.

LADY HARCOURT TO MISS MARSDEN.

A Pretty kind of invitation truly this I have received; two melancholy creatures, the one sighing the misfortunes arrived to her, the other those that may be yet to come.

Tired of their own uniform dulness, they have wisely thought fit to send for me, that like the fools of old, I may make them laugh, even against their inclination: but I wont come. Hang it, that will seem illnatured too, well then, girls, behave tolerable, and perhaps I may; but I must have a little flirtation, or I shall die of the vapours. What with a squalling brat, a fond husband, and two languishing nymphs, I shall not be able to exist without some change.

In respect to Mr. Osborn's silence, we are all, my dear Charlotte, as much surpris'd as yourself. Mrs. Osborn's,
anxiety

anxiety is too visible to escape universal observation; in vain Delia tries to dispel the busy suggestions of maternal fear; in vain I essay by my volubility to divert her thoughts, if I succeed it is but for a moment. Lord Harcourt tells us, our fears are too tremblingly alive, and that he is confident a little time will prove to us how groundless they are; at any rate, Charlotte, you ought to be provided in case of the worst. What think you of Lord Newland for a husband? He was of our party the night before we left town, and was more mischievous and awkward than a monkey. Had I remained longer in town, a chain would have been absolutely necessary.

Only imagine what a mischance; in his officious haste he encountered the servant, upset the salver of tea, and effectually spoiled my fine set of Dresden. I was mortified, but he was much more so, as his embroidered waistcoat was a fellow sufferer.

Excuse, my beloved Charlotte, this badinage; you know my heart sufficiently to be assured of the real interest I take in your happiness; do not let apprehension prey upon your mind, the next ships will probably bring the
cause

cause of them, to apologize in person for his strange neglect. I would almost give a little finger to see the mating of two such sentimental lovers.

Mrs. Osborn is delighted at the prospect of your returning with me, and as a proof of it, Delia accompanies me the day after to-morrow to Ormeston-House, I shall there see my three charming friends together.

Lord Harcourt has business in town with Sir George, therefore if we do not have him to partake our pleasures, he will be also far enough from inspecting them. Adieu, my dear Charlotte, and believe me unalterably

Yours,

A. HARCOURT.

L E T-

L E T T E R LIII.

MR. MEREDITH TO VISCOUNT MALCOMB.

YOUR absence and frequent change of place whilst all our plans were in agitation, prevented my being as particular as you have often wished me to be, but the recent arrival of a ship from India enables me to send you the full success of my last dispatches thither.

Enclosed you will find the letters that have passed; I am sorry now that I had not withheld the last till Osborn's arrival, as might have conveyed it more forcibly, and have duped him easier; yet I think the picture we were so fortunate as to get, by the means of the sham highwayman, and the forged letter, are incontestible proofs; I am confident the hand is too well counterfeited ever to be discovered by an enraged and jealous lover, yet much may still be done if I see him the first; he has too high an opinion of my penetration to think me easily deceived by appearances, and too exalted notions of friendship to suspect I have betrayed

trayed him. He is now upon his return, and probably a few weeks will bring him to England: he has been completely successful, and brings home immense property.

Credulous Osborn; to us, my Lord, he owes that his claim was ever doubted. Curse on the sentimental Edgcomb and officious Harcourt, who so liberally furnished him with the means of investigating his rights, but for them he would have been to this day poor, have continued to reject the object of his love, and Charlotte, tired by his obstinate pride, might have become yours with ease; at present every nerve must be stretched to keep them asunder, for you may be well satisfied, that he will never again solicit her love, if we can once confirm him in the belief that her affections have wandered. That lively devil, Lady Harcourt, I fear more than all the rest united, she veils under her intolerable levity, such a share of penetration and keen satire, that, well grounded hypocrite as I am, I cannot help thinking that at every glance she reads the bottom of my heart: but no more of her. We must wait the events of Osborn's arrival, to form a system of future operations

rations. If I thought it would further our schemes, I would offer my hand to Miss Osborn, her fortune now will be an object, and I do not think my affluities have been hitherto ill received. From the interruption of Campbell, whom you seem to dread, there is nothing to be feared, as I am credibly informed, he is embarked for Italy. Let the love-sick swain enjoy in those fertile fields, the contemplation of his adorable, while we by nobly daring all, endeavour to merit the smiles of the blind goddess.

If you have nothing better to do with yourself, it would not be amiss to act over again at Ormeston-House the respectful tender manner you once assumed upon the Dartford road.

Tell Ormeston he must come to me, "borne upon the swiftest wings of love;" tell him I think I have traced his incognita, and that she is in a house into which our entrance will be very easy; she is visited by no person upon earth, but if it is her, she has not been long at Hounslow, and being in deep mourning, I imagine the old woman who foiled us so completely before, is dead. They tell me
she

she is very melancholy, but ten thousand times more captivating than ever.

Half this I know will be sufficient to bring Ormeston; tell him he must be quick to secure his prize, as such a treasure cannot be long hid.

Yours,

J. MEREDITH.

I had a devilish good run the other night, carried off a cool five thousand, besides rubbing off some debts of honour. I am in such good humour with fortune, that I have half a mind to be grateful, leave off rambling, and take the little prim Delia. Adieu, dear fellow.

END OF THE FIRST VOL.

